

International Internal Discussion Bulletin

Volume XX, Number 11

December 1984

\$1.80

Contents

Page

Draft Resolution on the Iranian Revolution

by Saber, HKS, Iran

2

On Workers and Farmers Governments

by Aurore, Revolutionary Communist League, France

15

Theses on the Workers' and Farmers' Government

by George Breitman, Fourth Internationalist Tendency, United States

35

08.12

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

CONTENTS

PART 1: THE PRESENT SITUATION

- 1) The Situation of the Mass Movement
- 2) The Reconstruction of the Bourgeois State
- 3) The Return of Capitalist Order

PART 2: THE LESSONS OF THE REVOLUTION

- 1) The Victory of the Counter-Revolution
- 2) The Defeat of the Mass Movement
- 3) The Failure of the Left

PART 3: TASKS AND PERSPECTIVES

- 1) For the Overthrow of the Khomeini Regime
- 2) Rebuild the Workers Organisations
- 3) Building the Revolutionary Party

Resolutions From May, 1981 International Executive Committee Meeting

1. The World Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International (Sept. 29 and Oct. 5, 1981) Intercontinental Press, \$2.50 for 100N issues
2. The Cuban Revolution, the Castroists, and the Fourth International (Oct. 19, 1981) Intercontinental Press, \$1.25

To order any above write: Intercontinental Press
410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014
Enclose check or money order plus \$.50 for shipping costs.

Draft Resolution on the Iranian Revolution

by Saber, HKS, Iran

(Although the United Secretariat at its meeting of November 8-11 rejected the proposal to place a separate point on Iran on the agenda of the 1985 World Congress, and did not adopt the general line of the "Draft Resolution on Iran" it agreed to the proposal by Saber to publish this text in light of the comrade's proposal to eventually submit it as an amendment to the "Theses on the World Situation.")

Part 1: The Present Situation

Five years after the overthrow of the Shah's regime the fundamental features of the present reality of the Iranian revolution, all indicate a complete reversal of the revolutionary movement. The results are clear: the loss of all the gains of the exploited and toiling masses, the reestablishment of a vicious dictatorship more barbaric than the Shah's rule, the reemergence of a brutal capitalist 'order', and the reintegration of the Iranian economy within the world imperialist system.

1 The Situation of the Mass Movement

a) The Iranian revolution was marked above all else, by the fact that it represented the beginnings of a period of direct intervention of the masses in their millions in determining the fate of the social order. The extent and depth of which was not comparable to the entire previous historical period in Iran or for that matter to other revolutions in modern history. In fact, the Iranian revolution would always remain an excellent example of how a mass movement in its development can overthrow the political and military power of a vicious bourgeois dictatorship. The revolutionary upsurge resulted in numerous forms of self-organisation of the masses. The fate of the revolution depended on the extension and development of these organs: e.g., workers, peasants and soldiers *shoras* (councils), neighbourhood committees, etc. Many sections of the population which had been inactive for a long period were brought into the struggles, including, e.g. the women's movement in defence of equal rights, the movement of the oppressed nationalities for self-determination, the struggles of the unemployed for jobs and social security, the student movement for the control of the educational system and its independence from the state etc.

The Shora movement which despite all its shortcomings was the most significant of all these and resisted the attacks of the counter-revolution the longest, is now completely crushed. Its "legal" fate has been left to the future decisions of the Islamic Assembly, which has already constitutionally limited its powers to and "Islamic," "consultative" and "cooperative" (with the management) body with the participation of the bosses and under the direct control of the state. If they are ever revived under such limits, they would obviously not differ greatly from the Shah's corporate "syndicates" i.e. the tools of capitalist repression in the factories. Today, however, no organisations of the working class exists or are permitted to exist by the laws of the Islamic Republic.

b) The revolution was in its basic social aims, a revolt against the injustices of the Shah's "White Revolution" and the economic crisis it had brought about by the late 70s. It did bring immediately in its wake many social and economic gains of importance for the vast majority of the masses. There was an extensive takeover of the largest sector of the private and the state owned large-scale industry by the workers, and the beginnings of an imposition of workers control of production and distribution, the level of which has not been surpassed in recent revolutions in the underdeveloped capitalist economies. The peasants' seizure of most large estates, the independent village committees' distribution of land, the establishment of peasants' cooperatives, and the cutting off of the "middle men" usurers and profiteers were important features of the revolutionary period. These developments marked the dynamics of the continuing revolutionary struggles after the overthrow of the Shah's regime.

None of these gains have been consolidated. Today it can be clearly stated that no social layer of the exploited and oppressed feels that it has gained anything out of the "revolution." Even the basic improvements in the standard of living of the masses have either been eroded or pushed back — e.g. the more or less general increase in lower wages, the shortening of the working week, the improvements in social securities, housing for the poor, etc. Instead, we have now a runaway inflation, massive unemployment, longer hours, more homeless, and an ever increasing migration from the countryside to the cities.

The depths of the economic misery for the vast majority of the masses cannot be compared even to the worst years of the last 3 decades.

c) The political patterns of all the revolutionary upsurges in Iran's modern history indicate that the central political demands of the masses have always been around the questions of democratic rights. The February insurrection brought about many democratic rights, the struggles for which have marked the entire history of the last 80 years of political movements. For the first time, the Iranian masses enjoyed the basic rights to freedom of expression and organisation, the right to engage in political activities, to demonstrate and strike, the right of electing officials etc.

All these gains have also been brutally suppressed. They do not even exist at the level of the so-called "new revolutionary" Islamic Constitution. The present degree of the democratic rights actually practiced or recognised by the state is only comparable to what existed before the beginnings of the 20th Century. The

only "right" recognized by the clerical rulers is that of complete subjugation of everything to the arbitrary rule of the mullahs.

The repressive form of the "Republican" state is such that now the new ruling bourgeois factions can intervene even in the private lives of citizens. What the masses are allowed to believe, wear, eat or drink are all decided by the state. The central demand of the Iranian revolution for a truly democratic and constituent assembly representing the will of the masses has not been realized. In its place we now have an Islamic Council of Guardians appointed by the clergy that can overrule any decision that it may consider to contradict the Islamic code. Indeed, Iran has not been as undemocratically run as it is today for almost a century.

The fact that the Islamic state is a lot more repressive than an ordinary capitalist dictatorship is clearly indicated by the way women are treated in Iran. The reactionary religious attacks on the most basic rights of women cannot simply be explained as being caused by the crisis of capitalism. It has a lot more to do with the specific clerical rule and its antiquated ideology.

2 The Reconstruction of the bourgeois state

a) The actual regime that has replaced the Shah's dictatorship and that has now taken hold of all reins of power has proved to be more willing and better equipped to unleash the most barbaric inhuman repression against the oppressed and toiling masses.

The historical task of the Iranian revolution in democratizing the state has been pushed back by a regime that even in its demagogic "legal" expression openly claims that all power rests with one man who is completely outside all forms of secular control. In Khomeini's "republic" no representative body can make any decisions that contradict his wishes as the high *faghih*. He can decide who may become a candidate in an election, overrule the results of elections, change and alter any social and political institution, control all the social resources, etc.

In the place of a monarchist dictatorship, therefore, there is now established in Iran a clerical dictatorship which claims to have a far more unlimited absolutist "divine" power. The separation of the mosque from the state which has been the most elementary demand of the movement for democracy for over a century is now pushed even further out of reach than it was before the Constitutional Revolution of 1907-09.

Capitalism, which in its period of growth under the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran was forced to remove certain functions of the state from the hands of the Shiite clergy, has now resorted to a theocratic form of rule to defeat the revolution. The Islamic Republic is nothing more than a form of government in which a clerical sect considering itself outside the "earthly" control of the masses has proclaimed itself the supreme ruler of the fate of society.

The ultra-centralized state which was formed with the help of the imperialist powers after the Russian Revolution to block the advance of Bolshevism had to be based on a system of national privileges for the *Farsis* and the total suppression of the national rights of all other nationalities. The Islamic rulers who claim Iran recognises no sacred borders or nationalities have however faithfully followed the Pahlavi path as far as the rights of oppressed nationalities in Iran are concerned. Any victory in the struggles of these nationalities for their national rights is considered a major threat for the centralized state apparatus. The Iranian Kurds who are heroically defending their rights for self-determination are being threatened with total physical annihilation. From military occupation of the Kurdish areas, the Teheran regime has advanced to the systematic bombing of villages (including with chemical bombs), and the destruction of crops which has led to devastation of entire regions.

b) Despite the importance thus placed on the so-called

ideological apparatus of the state, the repressive instruments of the state have also grown to frightening proportions. The destruction of the Shah's secret police, the army, the military courts, etc, were the most immediate objective of the revolutionary movement. Even before the actual overthrow of the Shah's regime, its instruments of repression were weakening and disintegrating under the blows of the mass mobilisations. Five years later, however, not only have all these been reconstructed to almost their pre-revolutionary strength, but also, there has appeared in addition, new and even more formidable instruments of repression, which claim legitimacy because of having "grown out of the revolution." Besides the rebuilt army and the secret police there are now a whole network of the so-called revolutionary institutions (*nahads*) incomparable in their brutality to anything that existed before. The Islamic *Pasdaran* army, the Imam's *Komitehs* (neighbourhood police), the Islamic *Anjomans* (associations operating in every factory or institution), the Islamic courts, the para-military force of the *Hezbollahs* (supporters of the "Party of God") etc, have together meted out the worst repression seen in recent history anywhere in the world.

Any opposition to the "unity of word" (the word of Khomeini) can result in the execution of the culprit. In the last two years alone the Islamic regime has executed 50 times more leftists than the Shah's regime did in its 30 years of rule. The number of political prisoners has increased at least tenfold, mostly held without any charges and without any information about their whereabouts. The moral, psychological and physical destruction of political opponents practiced by Khomeini's regime has scarcely been surpassed by Hitler.

c) The enormous size and power of the state bureaucracy has always been a focal point of popular struggles in Iran. During the Shah's rule its dimensions grew to unprecedented levels. The largest part of the social wealth was in fact unproductively swallowed by the bureaucracy. Many institutions were created to simply legitimize "official" bribery for the "social base" of the dictatorship. Today, the size of this bureaucracy living off the back of the masses has doubled.

The integration of the instruments of clerical rule into the reconstructed bourgeois apparatus has resulted in one of the largest bureaucracies in the backward countries. In addition to the over 1.5 million "normal" state employees, there is now a clientele base of over 1.2 million paid mercenaries of the regime. Furthermore, in addition to the so-called "mass revolutionary base" of the regime (consisting of over 200,000 *Pasdarans*, 300,000 committeemen and all the other more loosely set up associations like the *Basij* or the Islamic *anjomans*), a large proportion of the Shiite clergy itself with the entire networks of the mosques and its hangers-on is also more or less paid by the state.

There is now in Iran an absurd economic situation in which despite the fact that the oil revenues are back to their high levels (\$23 billion last year), and that many of the more openly corrupt consumption of the military-police apparatus of the Shah have been stopped, the real expenditure on development has dropped to a fifth of the pre-revolutionary period. Whilst the various "charitable" foundations of the mullahs divert twice that amount for the well-being of the clergy and its henchmen.

3 The Return of Capitalist Order

a) What could be considered the specific feature of this revolution as compared to the previous ones in Iran, was its obviously social anti-capitalist character. The largest share of native capital was expropriated after the revolution. Five years later, still over 60 percent of the Iranian large-scale industry remains "nationalised." The suppression of the mass movement and the reestablishment of the bureaucratic state apparatus has, however, rapidly created the necessary conditions for the return of

capitalist "order," harsher, more exploitative, more corrupt and more backward than before.

A new layer of capitalist profiteers has moved in to replace the Shah's entourage. This layer, with the backing of the clergy (to whom it has political and social-familial links) and through the channels of the state has rapidly amassed enormous wealth. This new capitalist ruling faction, which is extremely backward in its outlook, has come out of the Bazaar merchants and is marked by a penchant for hoarding and speculation. "Quick profits" is the motto of this new "nationalist" bourgeoisie. It has no qualms about the barbaric forms of accumulation it uses in its rush to gain what was denied to it under the Shah.

The scarcities in most basic necessities, the runaway inflation and super-exploitation of workers and poor peasants are the only noticeable characteristics of the "new" Islamic capitalism. Under the banner of Islam the worst aspects of backward Iranian capitalism have become inviolable "sacred" laws.

The proposed new labour codes leave the capitalist a free hand in deciding the duration of the working day as long as the individual worker has agreed to it according to "a contract." Given the fact that there are now over 4 million unemployed this fact alone means that capitalism can extract as much surplus out of the individual workers as it may see fit. A committee in which the representative of the boss and the ministry of labour sit beside the "representative" of the workers (not freely elected by them), can terminate the contract if the boss demands it. No forms of collective bargaining is considered to be Islamic.

The Council of Guardians of the Islamic Constitution has declared capitalist or landed private property to be sacrosanct and not subject to any limitations. The much publicised but meagre land reform laws which provided for compulsory sale of land by large landlords to the landless peasants has therefore been annulled because it was considered to be against Islam. Already, forced evacuation of the peasants from lands they occupied after the revolution has been more or less completed.

The other equally demagogic proposal for the nationalisation of foreign trade has turned into a law facilitating the monopoly of foreign trade and internal trade for a group of pro-regime capitalists. Being granted an import licence is the surest way of becoming a member of the ruling capitalist clique. The benefits from the difference between the "official" rates of exchange and the actual market prices alone can turn a lumpen merchant into a tycoon.

Khomeini's Islamic regime, whatever grudges it may have against any specific group of capitalists, is proving daily that it is at the service of private property and class rule based on exploitation of the majority by a handful of reactionary profiteers. If anything, today the concentration of property and the rates of exploitation are higher than ever before.

b) The anti-imperialist rhetoric of the Iranian regime has attracted much attention. The reality shows, however, that today the economic, political and military dependence on imperialism is if not deeper no less than before. The Islamic rulers have shown that to remain in power they are prepared to be as servile as may be required and to pay as high a price as may be demanded.

Of all the exploitative and oppressive secret treaties which the Pahlavi regime signed with various imperialist powers, only one which was known to the public and much hated has been actually declared annulled by the new regime. Even in this case the actual content of the treaty remains to be published. In order not to upset U.S. imperialism the Iranian regime did more. It also at the same time cancelled another entirely different treaty. The 1921 treaty with the Soviet Union.

The Islamic regime has granted over-generous compensation for all the foreign capitals which it was forced to nationalise. De-

spite the fact that most of the companies involved owed many times their assets to the Iranian Banks. It has also completely written off the so-called "loans" that the Shah had been forced to give to U.S. friends. This alone account for \$9 billion. It has not seriously pursued its claims on a \$20 billion arms deal with the USA, the money for which was already paid by the Shah. It has capitulated before the exorbitant claims of many U.S. companies, including the Chase Manhattan Bank which owes \$3 billion to Iran. It is estimated that only because of the U.S. embassy takeover in Teheran, the "anti-imperialist" Khomeini has paid up to \$9 billion.

The value of Iranian imports from the major imperialist countries are back at their highest levels under the Shah. These now account for over 90 percent of the total. The largest portion of which is spent on raw materials and basic foodstuffs rather than machinery. Joint ventures with imperialism are once again flourishing. Almost without exception, all the consumer goods produced in Iran under license from international monopolies are being paid for as under the Shah. All that have changed are the names of the goods. Many foreign capitalists are openly declaring their joy at the opportunities for huge and quick profits available in Iran. The only thing which is keeping the direct involvement of imperialist countries at a low level is the still unstable situation, especially because of the Iran-Iraq war.

The dependence of Khomeini's regime on imperialism for arms is now a well known fact. Other than the usual American and West European suppliers, Israel, South Africa and South Korea have been added to the list. It is now clear that even during the "hostage crisis," the flow of U.S. arms and spare parts never stopped.

c) The foreign policy of the Iranian regime is the best indicator of its international alliances. Every concrete measure that it has undertaken internationally, leaving the empty rhetoric aside, has been within the framework of defending the interests of reaction. It has openly offered an anti-communist united front with Turkey and Pakistan. The Iranian regime is already cooperating with these military dictatorships in suppressing Kurdish and Baluchi movements. It has offered lucrative trade deals to induce these two most important allies of U.S. imperialism into a revival of the old treaty between the three countries under the Shah. The policy of "neither East nor West" has meant in the Middle East a convergence of Iranian policies with the interests of some imperialist powers, despite its contradictory aspects. Inside OPEC the Iranians are in total agreement with the British. Within the non-aligned movement they are in agreement with the anti-communist bloc. Nevertheless, some petty-bourgeois nationalist factions within the Iranian regime have developed alongside of their deep hatred of Communism and the USSR, a call for the non-intervention of the USA in the region and a rejection of all "the Western values" including democracy. This has resulted in a tendency to agitate and campaign against "the Great Satan" (USA) and its allies in the Middle East in a way which has influenced some of the activities against the USA, Saudi Arabia and some of the Gulf Sheikdoms, particularly in Lebanon. These have, however, been publicly condemned by Khomeini himself as was the case with the alleged mining of the Red Sea.

The last claim of Khomeini's regime to the anti-imperialist mantle is its "holy war" against the Iraqi regime which is presented as the tool of U.S. imperialism and a Zionist stooge. This war is however serving best the interests of USA and Israel, both of which are directly or indirectly supplying Iran with arms, ammunition and spare parts. Military presence of the U.S. imperialism in the region is directly linked to this war. Thanks to Khomeini's regime the USA has built four military bases in this region and is openly collaborating in joint military manoeuvres with the reactionary sheikdoms in the Gulf. The war has also

been instrumental in strengthening Israel which after the overthrow of the Shah's regime has become the only strategic ally of U.S. imperialism.

The consolidation of the bourgeois state in Iran and the political strengthening of the Iraqi Baathist regime are both the results of the war. The destruction of human lives and economic resources has deeply weakened both countries, while imperialism is reaping the benefits. Both regimes are therefore provided with enough support to continue the war without however either side being allowed to gain a decisive superiority. Four years of war

has decisively shifted the balance of forces in the region in the interest of U.S. imperialism. The Iranian regime is at present the main instrument in bringing this about.

Khomeini's interests in continuing this war are clear. The militarisation of social life, the justification of suppression of all legitimate demands of the masses, the consolidation of the most cynical factions within the regime and most important of all a return to the situation of becoming a dependent capitalist regime under the cover of having to get help from any possible source.

Part 2 The Lessons of the Revolution

The facts of the present situation in Iran indicate that the revolutionary mass movement has subsided, and is unable to confront the counter-revolution, which has taken complete hold of power based on a reconstructed and more formidable repressive bourgeois state and that the new regime is rapidly creating all the necessary conditions for the reestablishment of an even more corrupt and exploitative order integrated into the world imperialist system.

How has the Iranian revolution resulted in such an outcome?

1 The Victory of the Counter Revolution

a) The established counter revolution has in fact come out of the revolution itself. The very same forces which claimed the leadership of the February overthrow have now taken charge of the repressive state and are leading the counterrevolutionary drive of the Iranian bourgeoisie and world imperialism. There must be no confusion on this. The imperialists, the ousted bourgeois factions, the internal forces of the old dictatorship have only been able to intervene and influence the course of events indirectly and through Khomeini's leadership. He is, and has been throughout this period, the leader of the counter revolution.

To hold, therefore, that because of the dislike of the Islamic regime by imperialism revolutionaries must give it support is to commit a grave mistake. The logic of such a position would inevitably lead to capitulation in the face of the actually existing and presently active counter-revolution.

To say also that because the regime which has come out of the revolution is not yet overthrown by imperialism or the monarchist bourgeois, hence the revolution is still continuing, albeit in a distorted form, is to entirely misjudge the actual continuing drive of the Khomeini counter-revolution.

The counter-revolution has been victorious and it has come out of the leadership of the revolution.

It is now absolutely clear and well documented that before the February insurrection important sections of the army, the secret police and the bureaucracy went behind Khomeini. U.S. imperialism also directly intervened to bring about a negotiation between the chiefs of the armed forces and Khomeini leadership. Not to mention many of the biggest bourgeois entrepreneurs who gave Khomeini huge sums of money to organise his "leadership."

Given the broadness of the mass movement and its radicalism, the only way that the bourgeois counter-revolution could have succeeded in defeating the revolution was by "joining" it. This could have been possible only by supporting a faction within the opposition to the Shah that could ensure a degree of control over the masses. This was one of the most (if not the most) important

factors in placing Khomeini at the head of the mass movement.

The reasons why the Shiite clergy, especially Khomeini's faction, was well suited for this task should be obvious. The clergy has always been an important institution of the state well trained in defending class society and private property. After all, the Shiite hierarchy has been the main ideological prop of the state. Khomeini himself had come from a faction which had already proven its loyalty to the ruling class by helping it in the 1953 coup. It was also the least hated instrument of the state because it was not a structural part of what it was supporting. Especially because of the post-White revolution period of capitalist development the clergy had been relegated to a secondary position. Indeed, because of this a growing faction within the hierarchy had been forced into a position of opposition to the Shah's regime. This could now be utilized as a passport inside the mass movement.

Given the weakness of the bourgeois political opposition which was not allowed to operate under the Shah, the clergy with a nationwide network of mullahs and mosques provided the strong instrument-cum-party necessary for "organizing" and channelizing the spontaneous mass movement. It could also provide the type of vague populist ideology needed to blunt the radical demands of the masses and to unite them around a veiled bourgeois programme. Given the predominance of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the peasant migrants in the early stages of the mass movement, the call of the clergy for "Islamic Justice," "Islamic capitalism," "Islamic army," and "Islamic state" could immediately find a willing mass base.

To deny, even today, that Khomeini's counter-revolutionary drive coincided with its efforts to place itself at the leadership of the revolution is to go against all the facts now known to millions of Iranians themselves. To deny also that from the beginning it was helped in these efforts by the ruling classes and their imperialist backers is to misunderstand the main course of events in the Iranian revolution.

b) It is, therefore, a total mystification to characterise the Iranian revolution as "a popular anti-imperialist revolution led, however, by bourgeois nationalist forces." This completely misses out the specific counter-revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie and its political tool within the revolution.

The political and economic crisis of the 1976-78 period which set the scene for the mass unrest, was made up of different and contradictory factors. Alongside the mass movement of protests against the Shah's dependent capitalist dictatorship, there were also important rifts inside the bourgeoisie as a whole, both within the pro-Shah sections and between the pro and anti-Shah sections. These bourgeois oppositions to the Shah's rule were transformed as the revolutionary crisis grew and deepened.

There was, firstly, a movement for the reform of the Shah's

state from within the top "modernist" bourgeoisie which favoured the limitation of the Royal Family's absolute powers and was for a certain degree of nationalisation of the capitalist state. The requirements of further capitalist development themselves necessitated these reforms. This faction had already formed itself within the Shah's single party (Rastakhiz) before the revolutionary crisis. It had the support of an important section of the technocrats and bureaucrats inside Iran, and influential groups within the U.S. establishment.

As the crisis deepened this faction became increasingly vociferous in its opposition to the Shah. It began to use the threat of the mass movement as a leverage in its dealings with the Shah. The ousting of the Hoveida government and the formation of Amouzegar's cabinet was a concession to this faction. The development of the mass movement was however pushing other bourgeois oppositionists to the forefront.

This faction knew that in order to ride the crisis it had to hide behind bourgeois politicians less associated with the Shah's dictatorship. In no other way could it hope to enjoy a certain degree of support inside the mass movement. The reemergence of the corpse called the National Front and the rise of newly created bourgeois liberal groupings, (e.g. the Radical Movement) were linked to this trend.

There was also an opposition to the Shah from within the more traditional sectors of the bourgeoisie (the big bazaar merchants and the small and medium sized capitalists from the more traditional sectors of the industry). The White Revolution and the type of capitalist growth which followed it had also enriched these layers. Nevertheless they were more or less pushed out of the main channels of the state-backed capital accumulation (monopolistic positions within the foreign licensed consumer goods production) and hence out of the ruling class.

The structural crisis of the Iranian capitalism in the mid-70s had resulted in the sharpening of the attacks by the Shah's state on these layers which still had a section of the internal market. This hold had to be weakened to allow the monopolies to resolve their crisis of overproduction. The consumer goods oriented and technologically dependent industrialisation meant a strong tendency for bureaucratic control of the internal market through the state. To these layers, opposition to the Shah's rule was a matter of life or death struggle. They could in no way be satisfied with the type of reforms that were being proposed by the other factions. They demanded a more radical change within the power structures. Whilst the reformist factions vehemently opposed any radical change that could shake up the power of the ruling class as a whole, the other factions' interests were in no way harmed by demanding no less than the removal of the Shah's regime.

As the mass movement grew, it became obvious that this faction could decisively outbid the other. Through the traditional channels of the Bazaar economy it could draw on the active support of the urban petty bourgeois and the enormous mass of the urban poor linked to it. This faction had, in addition, many links with the powerful Shiite hierarchy. Ever since the White Revolution the traditional bourgeoisie and the Shiite clergy had drawn closer and closer together.

An important lesson drawn by a section of the bourgeoisie after its defeat in 1953 was precisely that without an Islamic ideology and without the backing of the mullahs it could never ensure enough mass support to enable it to pose as a realistic alternative both to the Shah and to the left. Bazargan's and Taleghani's Freedom Movement represented this trend. This "party" was now offered an opportunity to save the bourgeoisie in its moment of crisis.

The formation of Sharif Emani's cabinet represented a move by the Shah's regime to also include this faction in whatever concessions it had to give. "The government of national concilia-

tion" as it called itself, could however neither satisfy the two bourgeois factions, nor quench the mass movement which by now had gathered a new vitality because of the gradually developing General strike. Khomeini was popular because he appeared to be consistently calling for the overthrow of the Shah. But in this period he was preparing to reach an agreement with the regime. In fact it was precisely in this period that with the help of the regime Khomeini's "leadership" was being established with the mass movement. By September 1978 a certain degree of control was exercised which could have allowed a compromise at the top. What put a stop to this was the developing General Strike.

The stage was thus set for the opening of the pre-revolutionary period of Sept.-Feb., marked by the further isolation of the Shah's regime, demoralisation of the army and the police, the radicalisation of the masses and the complete paralysis of the entire bourgeois society because of the very effective general strike.

c) U.S. imperialism and the pro-Shah bourgeoisie were now forced to go a lot further in giving concessions to the mass movement. The removal of the Shah from the scene and the establishment of the Bakhtiar government was in its time and in itself a very radical concession by the dictatorship. It was hoped that in this way the reformist faction which was already made to look more acceptable would be strengthened and thus force the more radical faction into a compromise.

It was, however, already too late for such compromises. The mass movement was becoming extremely confident of its own strength and the prevailing mood was that of not agreeing to anything less than the complete ouster of the Shah. Furthermore, any politician who tried to reach a compromise with the Shah, immediately lost all support. In fact, even the National Front was forced to renounce Bakhtiar. This explains the so-called "intransigence" of Khomeini's stand. By denouncing Bakhtiar (with whom his representatives in Iran were nevertheless holding secret negotiations) and supporting the mass movement he was strengthening his own hand vis-a-vis both factions of the bourgeois opposition. He was forcing the more popular figures within these factions to accept his "leadership" and preventing them from reaching any compromises without his involvement.

The military circles and the imperialists were by this time prepared to give up a lot more. There was a growing restlessness within the army. The pro-Shah hardliners were preparing for a coup against Bakhtiar. This would have completely finished off the army and with it the last hope of the bourgeoisie in maintaining class rule. It was becoming obvious that a compromise had to be reached with Khomeini. This is exactly what took place. Secret negotiations between Beheshti and Bazargan on the one side and the heads of the army and the secret police on the other side were held in Teheran. The arbiter was the U.S. representative General Huyser whose job was to ensure that the army would keep its side of the bargain. Major sections of the ruling class had been pushed by the course of events, and the encouragement of the Carter administration, to accept sharing power with the opposition. What was hoped was a smooth transition from the top to a Bazargan government.

Bazargan had emerged as the acceptable alternative because he was the only one who could bring about a coalition involving both major bourgeois factions whilst at the same time being more associated with the by now more powerful Khomeini leadership. Khomeini was also forced to accept such a deal because this provided the best cover for the clergy's own designs for power. At that time the clergy could not make any open claims on political power. Khomeini, to alleviate the fears of the bourgeoisie, and to keep his own options open within the mass movement, was constantly reassuring everybody that once the Shah was

gone he would go back to Qom and continue with his "religious duties." Khomeini was thus allowed to return to Iran from exile and his appointed provisional government was preparing to take over from Bakhtiar.

The February insurrection was however not part of the deal. Some of the now staunch supporters of the Shah within the chiefs of the armed forces who opposed the U.S.-backed compromise tried to change the course of events by organizing a military coup. This resulted in an immediate mass reaction and insurrection, which was initially opposed by Khomeini. But they joined in because otherwise they would have lost all control of the mass movement and with it any hope of saving the state apparatus. The only way to divert the insurrection was to "lead" it. The army chiefs and the bureaucracy were prepared to give their allegiance to Khomeini and his Revolutionary Islamic Council, since this alone could save them from the insurrectionary masses. It was thus that the Bazargan's Provisional Revolutionary Government, as it was called replaced Bakhtiar's.

The blessings of Khomeini, therefore, ensured the establishment over the heads of the masses. In this way it is obvious that what appeared as "the leadership of the Iranian revolution" basically played from the beginning the role of an instrument of bourgeois political counter-revolution imposed from above in order to roll back the gains of the masses and to save as much of the bourgeois state apparatus as was possible under the given balance of social forces. The ruling class was as yet in no position to resort to further repression.

d) Khomeini was, however, not doing all this service to play the second fiddle. He was simply preparing for the take over of all power at a more favourable moment. He represented a faction of the clergy that was bent on establishing a more direct role for the Shiite hierarchy ever since the Mosadegh period. This faction, in cooperation with the then head of the secret police, made a move in the early 60's for power. But failed. History was now providing it with an opportunity that it could not allow to slip away. Especially given the fact that the bourgeois class was extremely weakened and hardly in a position to put up any resistance. The latter with the approval of the imperialist master, had called on the clergy to save it in its moment of trouble by sharing power. What followed next in the post-revolutionary period can only be understood if the designs of the clergy for power are taken into account.

In the beginning the clergy did not have the necessary instruments for exercising power. The Khomeini faction did not even have hegemony inside the Shiite hierarchy. Many clerical heads opposed the participation of the clergy in politics. It could not rely on the existing institutions in the state either, since they were entirely unsuitable to clerical domination. Amongst other reasons, they were all opposed to clerical rule anyway. Even the Prime Minister designate who was the most "Islamic" of all the bourgeois politicians, resisted any attempts by the mullahs to dominate the functions of the state. A period of preparation was thus necessary.

With the direct backing of Khomeini, this faction first organised a political party: The Islamic Republican Party. This was simply presented as one newly formed party among others. Later on, however, this party pounced on all others and it has now replaced the Shah's single party. Through the networks of pro-Khomeini mullahs it established an entire organisation of neighbourhood committees and Pasdaran units supposedly to help the government to keep law and order and to resist the monarchist counter revolution. Revolutionary Islamic Courts were also set up to punish the Shah's henchmen. These courts quickly executed a few of the most hated elements of the old regime, but only in order to save the majority from the anger of the masses. The Imam's committees, the Pasdaran army and the Islamic courts

rapidly replaced the Shah's instruments of repression.

All these moves were initially supported by the bourgeoisie which realized that it was only through these measures that it could hope to finish off the revolution and begin the "period of reconstruction." The newly created "revolutionary institutions" were serving well the Bazargan government, constantly repeating their allegiance to it. Later on, however, they became instruments of the clergy in ousting the bourgeois politicians from the reins of power and in directly dominating the state apparatus.

Khomeini also forced an early referendum on the nature of the regime to replace the Shah: Monarchy or the Islamic Republic? Despite the grumblings of the bourgeois politicians they had to accept this undemocratic method of determining the fate of the state, because the other alternative was the formation of the promised constituent assembly. The election of such an assembly during that revolutionary period would have of course created many threats for bourgeois rule. It was later claimed that since 98 percent of the people had voted for an Islamic Republic, hence the constituent assembly must be replaced with an assembly of "experts" (khobregan) based on Islamic law. The small assembly which was thus formed had of course a majority of pro-Khomeini politicians and mullahs who suddenly brought out a constitution giving dictatorial power to Khomeini as the chief of the experts. The clause on Velayt-e-Faghih (the rule of the chief mullah) was resisted by the bourgeois politicians, but the clergy pushed it through by demagogic appeals to the anti-imperialist sentiments of the masses and through the controlled mass mobilisations around the U.S. embassy and by appealing to the strong cult of Khomeini.

Hence, Khomeini's clerical faction cooperated with the various bourgeois groupings in joint efforts by the ruling class to prevent the total destruction of the bourgeois state in diverting and suppressing the Iranian revolution. Whilst at the same time it was always strengthening its own hand and trying to subordinate other factions to its own rule. It used its advantageous positions within the mass movement to bypass the bourgeois state whenever it suited its own faction. But it was also forging a new apparatus of repression that was being gradually integrated into the state as the competition with other factions was being resolved in its favour.

2 The Defeat of the Mass Movement

a) Despite Khomeini's Islamic counter-revolution, the mass revolutionary movement developed and broadened after the overthrow of the Shah's regime. Another myth of the Iranian revolution is that Khomeini held a complete sway over the masses. The fact that Khomeini has never consented to any free elections, even immediately after the insurrection which was the period of his high popularity, shows that he himself did not believe this myth. He did certainly have a mass base, and its hard core was the best organised and the more active section of the masses. But, it in no way reflected the mass movement as a whole.

The vast majority of the revolutionary masses knew why they were against the Shah and what could satisfy their needs. The experience of the revolution itself had also taught them about their own strength and the necessity for getting themselves organized. Even when they were submitting to Khomeini's leadership, which even before the insurrection was imposed by the use of force, they had also their own projects. It is extremely simplistic to portray the mass movement as having a homogeneously confused consciousness with total illusions in Khomeini.

Despite Khomeini, the workers organized Shoras, threw out the capitalists and their managers, including those appointed by Imam's government. The peasants occupied the land despite a call to wait for the Revolutionary Council's permission. The na-

tional minorities began to organize themselves despite the open repression of the new regime. Women demonstrated for equal rights in direct opposition to Khomeini himself. Students took over the running of all the educational establishments despite the appeals by the "leaders" to return to their studies. The masses did not give up their arms despite the call by Khomeini himself. The soldiers resisted attempts by the new regime to dissolve their shoras and themselves began to purge the army of the old officers.

Only a few weeks after the insurrection mass demonstrations in opposition to the Khomeini appointed government were being organized in many cities. The first leftist Mayday demonstration in Teheran drew over 300,000. Within the first few months the Fedayeen and the Mojahedeen which were seen by the masses to constitute forces to the left of the Khomeini leadership had developed a mass base if not more numerous at least comparable to that of Khomeini's. Even the bourgeois liberal groupings had a considerable base in the beginning. Mass support for Khomeini increasingly diminished. Other than the first presidential elections, in no other elections organized by the regime did more than 40 percent of the electorate participate. By the Summer of 1979, Khomeini had lost all support amongst the oppressed nationalities (i.e. the majority of the population), and in the populated Northern provinces. In all major industrial centers, e.g. Teheran and Ahwaz, Khomeini's support was minimal. Among the students the new regime could barely count on the support of 10 to 15 percent. Within the lower ranks of the army a similar situation existed. Six months before the ouster of Bani Sadr over 2 millions demonstrated in Teheran in defiance of the Khomeinist forces, whilst Beheshti could only draw less than 150,000 in a rival assembly. In the first round of the Majlis elections, at the height of Khomeini's anti-imperialist demagoguery, and despite the rigged machinery which controlled the polling stations, the left gathered over 3.5 million votes. The masses did have illusions in Khomeini, but not for long, and in no period was this true of the majority of the struggling layers: workers, poor peasants, national minorities, women, soldiers, students, etc.

b) The weakness of the revolutionary mass movement was based on another factor. The fact that it was immediately split by the imposition of the Khomeini leadership. There was after all, alongside the popular revolutionary upsurge and Islamic counter-revolution led by Khomeini. The latter, which was well organized and had the backing of the state apparatus, was mobilized against not only the forces of the old regime but also against the revolution. Especially in the decisive early stages, when the boundary between the two was unclear, the revolutionary masses could not put up the necessary resistance against what appeared to many of them as a part of themselves. The fact that the majority of the faces on the left also fell for this, did not of course, help.

When Khomeini's faction was imposing its own slogans on the mass demonstrations against the Shah, the left did not protest. When Khomeini appointed his Provisional Revolutionary Government, the Fedayeen, Mojahedeen, Tudeh Party and many other groups gave it support. When the newly set up Islamic Courts were issuing sentences of execution in secret trials against the members of the old regime the left was hailing this. When the regime began to attack the rights of women under the banner of "down with the Westernised prostitutes," the left at best ignored it as having secondary importance. When the freedom of the press was under attack, because it at first affected only the bourgeois press, the left did not resist. But soon afterwards, the left press was also shut down.

When the working class came under attack by the new regime it was under the banner of "the Islamic shoras." Many militant

workers who had themselves radicalised under the influence of the earlier war mobilisations dominated by Khomeini's leadership, could not by their own experience realise what was exactly happening. They did not resist these attacks because it involved a section of the working class itself. The memory of the earlier "united" mass movement still haunted everybody.

When bands of thugs organized by the Islamic Republican Party began to openly attack any independent meetings or demonstration, the usual tactic of "resistance" was to call on them: "unity, unity, the secret of victory." They were after all the people who had participated in the fight against the Shah. Later on, when the counter revolutionary designs of Khomeini's forces had become clear for everyone, it was however too late. Khomeini had by this time lost most of his mass base, but what was left was a lot more efficiently organized and well tempered into a strong instrument of repression.

Furthermore, Khomeini's faction was never a passive observer of the erosion of its base. It used all the forces of the state under its command (the completely controlled mass media, the institution of Friday Prayers, made to order demonstrations etc.) to demagogically whip up support around vague anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist rhetoric. The occupation of the U.S. embassy in Teheran was probably the best example of this method.

Having been defeated in Kurdistan and having become extremely unpopular after the first eight months of attacking the Iranian revolution, the U.S. embassy takeover provided a good cover. Khomeini's faction blamed everything on Bazargan's pro-USA policies, took over the state and diverted the masses' attention from their actual struggles to a show in front of the U.S. embassy. When workers fighting for their independent shoras were forced by other workers to abandon their struggle in the factory and go to the "den of spies" to hear the latest exposés about the "liberals" and the speeches of pro-Khomeini mullahs, it was not easy to resist.

Gradually the masses were, section by section, in successive waves of attacks beaten into submission to the rule of the Imam. Whilst the revolutionary masses did not have any leadership and were not united, the forces of the Khomeini counter revolution were directed from a well-placed and well-organised centre, which could command all the instruments of repression and stupification. The outcome of this struggle was clear. Especially when it is considered that many political organisations claiming to represent the interests of the masses were in fact the mouth-pieces of the counter-revolution.

c) The composition of the mass base of Khomeini itself was also a major factor in contributing to the confusion of the masses and their defeat. Khomeini's instruments of repression fed from social forces that were the most downtrodden and least privileged sections of the population. "Khomeini's soldiers" were recruited from the huge layers of the urban poor (the unemployed peasant migrants) and the pauperized petty bourgeois. Thanks to the Shah's White Revolution many peasants were forced to come to the urban centres looking for jobs, whilst the limited industrialisation could only absorb a small proportion of them. The consumer-goods-oriented industrialisation was also gradually eroding the petty bourgeois share of the internal market and forcing these layers into increasing reliance on family labour. The average size of the urban petty bourgeois family had increased to 7.6 members in the 70's.

These two layers represented an enormous reservoir for the instruments of repression. The urban poor alone represented around 20 percent of the population of most major cities. In Teheran for example they numbered over 700,000 in 1976. The Iranian petty bourgeois represents by far the largest single social layer. These layers were extremely atomised under the Shah's rule without any independent social outlook. Their vague ideas

of social justice could easily be diverted by Shiite demagogy. To them, even the poorest sections of the industrial proletariat appeared privileged. The phrase coined by the Shah's bureaucrats to designate the shanty town inhabited by the urban poor: "out of bounds," described also their social status. As far as the Shah's dictatorship was concerned over 5 millions were out of the boundaries of the "civil" society.

For many individuals within these layers, to become even a member of a vicious hezbollahi gang was enormous social progress. To become an armed Pasdar was to become "the King of the neighbourhood." To be actually recruited into the various instruments of repression meant to be able to go and beat the "hell out" of "those privileged heathens" and to get duely paid for it too. The Islamic regime has not bettered the situation of the majority of these elements. Nevertheless even "promoting" a few individuals in each neighbourhood was enough to make the rest hopeful. These layers were for a long period actively and fanatically falling behind Khomeini's demagogy en masse.

The only way they could have been won to the side of the revolution was by being shown a better way to achieve their demands. This necessitated independent organisations and a fight against the capitalist state. This could not have come out of these layers by themselves. An example had to be offered for them. And the only class capable of this was the working class, led by the revolutionary proletarian party.

If the working class could have taken the lead inside the mass movement in confronting the state and gaining improvements in their conditions, the way would have been shown to these layers. There was no objective social reason why they should have become a tool of Khomeini. Especially if the working class had taken up their demands for jobs and housing.

The working class demonstrated its objective strength and its potential for leading the entire mass of the workers and oppressed during four months of general strike which was what really broke the back of the Shah's dictatorship. It did not, however, develop its own nationwide independent organisation or the political leadership to enable it to pull behind itself the underprivileged layers. It was instead pulled down by these sectors.

3 The Failure of the Left

a) The basic cause of the failure of the Iranian revolution was, however, the absence of a revolutionary proletarian organisation with a revolutionary strategy and programme rooted in the vanguard layers. There was not even one revolutionary organisation of any significance which had a programme reflecting, albeit in a distorted way, the objective necessities of the Iranian revolution or providing a consistent and clear perspective for the revolutionary masses.

The basic lesson of the Iranian revolution is indeed that unless such an organisation already exists before the revolutionary upheaval, it would be extremely unlikely that it can come about in the course of the revolution itself. Given the rapidity with which the revolutionary crisis changes and transforms, and given the complexity of social class formations and alliances in the more developed of the backward countries and given the relative strength of the bourgeois formations, it is extremely difficult for a revolutionary force of any considerable size to grow out of the revolution itself, unless it has already established roots and traditions within the masses.

There were small nuclei of revolutionaries who fought for a revolutionary programme and who even grew rapidly in influence and strength within the first few months of the revolution. But this was hopelessly insufficient to effect the course of events. In each wave of repression or sudden turns of the political situation every revolutionary group lost most of what it had accumulated in the previous period. The first open attacks of the

new regime led to opportunist capitulationist deviations. Within the first year there were splits in almost all the revolutionary groups.

In countries like Iran, where the revolutionary periods are usually sandwiched in between long periods of severe repression in which mass organisations cannot develop, the importance of a revolutionary organisation capable of offering a political and organisational lead to the masses becomes more acute. Any organisation that does not already have a base inside the mass movement before the revolutions cannot develop its forces rapidly enough to enable it to assist the masses to organise themselves.

The semi-Stalinist Fedayeen organisation and the neo-radical bourgeois Mojahedeen who had fought the Shah's regime rapidly grew into mass organisations of enormous dimensions. Neither, however had a revolutionary leadership, based on a revolutionary strategy. Neither was capable of understanding the actual dynamics of the Iranian revolution. Both ended up by betraying the revolution. The former fell victim to a class collaborationist counter-revolutionary strategy of the pro-Moscow Tudeh Party, the other returned to its origins and became a part and parcel of the bourgeois liberal opposition.

The experience of the Iranian revolution proved once again that in our epoch, unless the revolutionary leadership fights consistently for a clear strategy of working class power, it will inevitably end up in the camp of reaction. Class collaboration was the death knell of the Iranian revolution. Without an anti-capitalist proletarian strategy, compromises with the bourgeois counter-revolution were inevitable.

The only way the mass of oppressed and toilers could have been won over to the side of the proletarian revolution was by the proletariat itself showing in action that it alone could defeat the bourgeois. The Iranian left was however trying to win the mass base of Khomeini by dampening a clear-cut class struggle and offering a compromise with the bourgeois and petty bourgeois layers.

No other group epitomizes this better than the Tudeh Party. This group which is the oldest and with the longest-standing traditions, had divided the Iranian revolution into three stages: the anti-Shah people's front, the democratic anti-imperialist front and the non-capitalist "path of development" which was to lead peacefully to socialism. The Tudeh party which was even prepared to include in its fronts anti-Shah monarchists, found the actual alignment of class forces in the revolution beyond its wildest dreams. It immediately capitulated to the counter-revolutionary coalition of the bourgeoisie and the clergy. When the rift between the two developed, it hailed Khomeini's faction as the truly revolutionary anti-imperialist force, giving it unconditional support. It dismissed the protests of the masses against the undemocratic practices of the Islamic regime by labelling it "a bourgeois liberal craving for democracy." The bourgeois counter-revolution was establishing itself by suppressing the democratic rights of the masses, but the Tudeh Party was hailing the temporary imprisonment of a few U.S. embassy personnel as the greatest forward step of the revolution.

Without the active support of the Tudeh Party, which had many professionals in its ranks, it would have been a lot more difficult for the clergy to crush the mass movement. The Tudeh party provided the clergy with many managers and foremen for the nationalised industries, propagandists within the state-controlled newspapers, TV and radio and even political interrogators in Khomeini's jails. The present fate of the Tudeh Party itself is a best proof of what such a policy can lead to.

b) Not having a revolutionary strategy the left failed to understand the driving forces of the Iranian revolution and the character of the contending forces inside it. In every phase of the

rapidly changing revolution, it made fundamental mistakes. In the decisive early period these mistakes insured an easy victory for the counter-revolution.

In the period leading up to the February insurrection, the left as an independent tendency within the mass movement did not exist. It simply merged within the Khomeini dominated movement, tailending the reactionary leadership. The only left group in Iran that criticised the appointed government by Khomeini was the HKS. Otherwise, no left tendency was distinguishable from the Khomeini leadership. The left should have called on the masses to resist any attempt at appointing a government from above. It could not have won, but this would have placed the left in a better position at a later period.

Immediately after the insurrection, the left heeded the calls of the joint army clergy military revolutionary command (which was later proved to have been headed by a CIA agent). Many of the members of the old regime arrested by the masses were handed over to the clergy. The "revolutionary Islamic Courts" were hailed by the left. The first declarations of the majority of groups on the left hailed Imam Khomeini for leading the revolution to victory.

A few months later it was absolutely clear where the main danger against the revolution lay. The bourgeois government was rapidly pushing back the gains of the masses. The only proper course of action was to organise for the defence and extension of the democratic rights and against all attempts by the new regime to curb them. The central slogan for that period was the call for the immediate convocation of a Constituent Assembly. Most groups ignored all this. These were considered subordinate demands. Whilst the so-called "class demands" were reduced to purely economic reforms, the counter-revolution however succeeded in blocking the anti-capitalist dynamics of the Iranian revolution by limiting precisely the democratic rights of the masses.

The left was also less interested in helping to organise the independent organs of the self-activity of the masses than in their own groups. No real efforts were made to extend the independent

organisation of the masses or to fight to democratise them and prevent the clergy's zealots inside them from imposing the will of the counter-revolution. The Stalinist traditions of the Iranian left and its bureaucratic approach to the mass movement strengthened substitutionist tendencies whereby each group was trying to form their own "mass organisations," kept "pure" and "independent" from any admixtures. In this way, instead of patient and consistent intervention in the actually existing Shora movement and struggling for their nationwide unity as a basis for the more general fight for a workers and peasants government, every major group were at best trying to form their own "real" shoras.

This proved fatal for the course of the revolution. In the favourable early periods of the revolution the Shora movement was left at the mercy of the Khomeinist forces. By the time the counter-revolutionary nature of the new regime had become an obvious actuality, the forces of reaction had already built a nationwide network of emasculated shoras which were utilized to crush the resistance of the working class.

The stagist concept of the Iranian revolution accepted by the vast majority of the left, meant that it always looked for alliances with the bourgeoisie rather than concentrating its efforts on building the independent force of the Iranian proletariat. The left in effect was tail-ending bourgeois politics throughout the revolution. It went behind Khomeini in fighting the Shah and behind bourgeois opposition to the Shah in fighting Khomeini. It never offered a clear independent programme. Hence every demagogic manoeuvre by the counter-revolution caught the left off-guard. The U.S. embassy takeover, for example, completely outmanoeuvred the left. Not to mention the hysterical chauvinism which drowned the left in the early stages of the Iran-Iraq war.

It is not an exaggeration today that as far as the fight for democracy was concerned, bourgeois liberal opposition or even the monarchists appeared to be more radical than the Stalinist left. Whilst in anti-capitalist demands, Khomeini's counter-revolution went a lot further than the left, which was glued to its minimum programme geared to the democratic stage.

Part 3 Tasks and Perspectives

1 For the Overthrow of the Khomeini Regime

a) The consolidation of Khomeini's clerical rule has corresponded to the defeat of the revolutionary mass movement. Without the overthrow of this regime there is absolutely no possibility for any further developments of the Iranian revolution. Khomeini's leadership, in the course of establishing the power of the counter-revolution and reconstructing the bourgeois state has completely isolated itself. What remains of the Islamic revolution today is simply a vicious repressive dictatorship hated by the vast majority of the Iranian workers and peasants. The central political demand for the vast majority of them is the overthrow of Khomeini's regime.

The balance of forces, at present, is however extremely unfavourable for actually posing the perspective on the immediate agenda. It is clear that a period of political and organisational preparatory work is necessary.

Such preparation must be concentrated around the main unrealized demands of the Iranian revolution which despite the present defeat, remains fresh in the memory of the masses. The demand for a democratically elected constituent assembly reflecting the will of the masses and basing itself on their self-organisation is still a central demand capable of uniting the vast majority

of the oppressed and toiling masses in revolutionary action. This must be linked to the fight for the revival of the Shora movement, which reflects the most immediate experience of the masses. All gains of the revolution were achieved in the course of that movement and were lost with its defeat.

The fight against Khomeini's reactionary war drive and the demand for an immediate end to the war with Iraq is a key issue in the present political period reflecting the interests of the vast majority of the workers and peasants. These demands should also be linked to a series of democratic, economic and social measures which would indicate what tasks should be on the agenda of the future constituent assembly. These must include the demand for the right of national minorities to self-determination (and the national constituent assemblies), full and equal rights for women, workers and peasants control of production and distribution and a workers and peasants plan for dealing with the present crisis of capitalism.

These demands and the fight for such a programme can provide the means for bringing together in a common movement all the sections of the masses in the necessary fight to overthrow Khomeini's regime.

b) The Khomeini regime, by suppressing the revolution and re-establishing the rule of the repressive bourgeois state has created the necessary conditions for the return to a "normal"

bourgeois rule. The Islamic counter revolution is now being rapidly transformed into an openly capitalist drive for stabilisation. This has, however, created a situation in which the clerical rule of the Khomeini faction is becoming increasingly unacceptable to the bourgeoisie. Khomeini's leadership has carried out its historic service to the bourgeoisie and its imperialist masters. It is, therefore, now being asked to step aside and clear the path for a return to direct bourgeois rule.

The enormous economic crisis, the destruction caused by the war, the massive unemployment, the collapse of Iranian industry and agriculture, linked with the extreme unpopularity of the present regime, is increasingly preparing the political atmosphere for not only a change to a bourgeois republic but even a return of the monarchy. Khomeini's rule is popularizing the Iranian monarchy day by day.

This transformation is however going on in a contradictory and crisis-ridden way. The rule of the clergy is basically incompatible with the normal functioning of the bourgeois state. The bourgeoisie accepted this only as a transitional and temporary measure. Whilst, Khomeini's faction of the clergy is not prepared to give up the power it has gained so easily. The present instability of the Islamic regime must be viewed within such a context.

The resistance by the clergy against bourgeois monarchist or republican opposition from within and without, should not be viewed as in anyway reflecting the pressures of the Iranian revolution. It is simply a result of the clergy's attempt to cling to power as long as possible.

Khomeini's regime should not be viewed as a normal bourgeois regime which clearly understands the needs of the class which it represents. It is at best an extremely backward tool for the bourgeoisie which the latter must now get rid of. And if necessary by force. Revolutionaries must not by any means slacken their determination to fight for the overthrow of this regime because of the fact that bourgeois forces oppose it too. In fact, everyday that the barbaric Islamic regime remains in power, the more popular will become the normal rule of the bourgeoisie. The stability of bourgeois normal rule that may follow Khomeini will have a direct relation to the struggle of the masses today in overthrowing the Islamic republic. Unless the masses organise themselves to carry out this task today, the bourgeoisie will eventually establish an even more stable rule on the ashes of the Iranian revolution.

2 Rebuild the Workers Organisations

a) Basing themselves on the fighting and organisational traditions of the Iranian working class, revolutionaries must concentrate their efforts on stimulating all the factors that can contribute to the reorganisation of the workers movement.

The experience of the Iranian revolution and the role of the general strike in the revolutionary upsurge of the masses has already proven beyond doubt the central social and economic position of the Iranian proletariat. It was shown that the growth of capitalism in the last few decades has decisively placed the Iranian working class at the head of all the revolutionary changes in Iran. What can bring about a favourable balance of forces against the Islamic regime today is the organisation of the working class. If they were to throw their organised weight behind the struggles of the vast majority of the population against Khomeini, there would be no reason why the revolutionary situation cannot be revived. In any case, this is the only way to put an end to the dreams of the bourgeoisie for a return to "the good old days."

b) Despite the repression, the possibility for the working class to organise and unite its efforts to resist the capitalist offensive does exist. The revolution, the long period of workers control, and the Shora movement have instilled in the Iranian working

class a revolutionary experience which must be utilized in organising the present fight. This experience gained through active revolutionary struggles has thrown up an entire layer of militant workers, which although it has been beheaded by the Islamic counter-revolution, has not been totally destroyed. It is today to this layer that the main task of reorganisation must fall.

Indeed, based on its own experiences, there already exists such a movement inside the working class. In many major industries the efforts to form independent, militant, underground workers' action committees to prepare for the intervention in the daily struggles are under way. In many factories secret workers circles or committees already exist and are active. The many strikes which have been organised in the last two years of the worst phase of repression indicate the potential which still exists inside the working class.

Revolutionaries must base themselves on this current and try to help build, extend and unite the movement for factory committees. This must be done in struggles for both the immediate demands as well as the fight against the imposition of many new capitalist laws which are trying to deny all rights of the working class in the face of a capitalist drive to push up the rates of exploitation.

A propaganda campaign on the basic tasks of the Iranian revolution and on the way the working class can prepare for a general strike to bring about revolutionary changes would pave the way for future resumption of mass action as a broader scale and would give the necessary political direction to the activities of the present factory committees.

c) The major ally of the proletariat, i.e. the poor peasants (including those migrating to towns) are also beginning to realise that the way to defend the gains of the revolution is to fight against the attacks of the new regime. Revolutionaries must take notice of the new mood amongst these layers for rebuilding and reviving their own independent organisations (e.g. peasant shoras and neighbourhood committees). The rising wave of struggles against the return of the large zamindarans is providing the new basis for the reorganisation of the poor peasants. Similarly, the aggravation of the housing question is providing the impulse for the urban poor to reorganise itself into neighbourhood committees.

Rebuilding the organisations of all the oppressed (the poor peasants, soldiers, women, youth) must go hand in hand with attempts in linking them all up with factory committees. The producers and consumers cooperatives which developed out of the revolution (and which have now become instruments of state rationing systems) have already provided the masses with a rich experience in how to extend and develop links with other social layers. The struggles against the emasculation of the cooperatives by the central government can provide the basis for uniting all the oppressed in a common fight against Khomeini's regime.

3 Building the Revolutionary Party

a) The defeat of the Iranian revolution is reflected particularly in the way in which the entire force of the left has been decimated. Almost the entire leadership of all the revolutionary organisations have either been physically destroyed or forced into exile. The large majority of the leading cadres of the opportunist class collaborationist groups have publicly denounced marxism and declared their submission to the "Imam's line." The mistakes, vacillations and open betrayals of these groups have created a condition of deep demoralisation inside the working class vanguard and suspicion of the left in general. A long period of patient work is needed to rebuild the influence of the left inside the workers and toilers of Iran.

On the other hand, however, these defeats have also shown the complete bankruptcy of Stalinism and petty-bourgeois populism,

which have been for a long time the historical scourges of the Iranian left. What has been defeated in opportunism and class collaboration. Revolutionary socialism has not been in any way vilified in the eyes of the vanguard by the experience of the Iranian revolution. It is now proven to many militants of all groups that only on the basis of a revolutionary socialist strategy can there be any real hope of building a truly revolutionary leadership.

The ideological and political conditions are therefore ripe for building the solid foundations of the nucleus of a revolutionary party. Inside many organisations on the left, revolutionary socialist currents critical of the opportunist tradition are taking shape. Denunciations of Stalinism and the stagist theory of revolution are now a common feature of many newly developing trends. The revolution itself has ended the debate and the doubts on the centrality of the role of the Iranian working class. Those elements provide within the present situation a basis from which to begin the fight for building a revolutionary party.

b) It is therefore clear that this fight must have as its main task the regroupment of all the revolutionary currents that are developing today. This would also facilitate and speed up the formation of similar currents in other organisations. A non-sectarian and patient approach to the process of regroupment of the revolutionary left in Iran, involving an open and democratic discussion of all the major issues of the Iranian revolution, the balance sheet of the left and the lessons to be drawn is vitally needed today.

The process must also be linked to a resolute struggle against opportunism and class collaboration and a consistent defence of revolutionary socialist principles on the basis of which a truly revolutionary strategy can be built. All forces claiming to be revolutionaries must show this in action, by cleansing their own house first. It is only in this way that the revolutionary left can regain its influence inside the vanguard and rebuild its links with the mass movement.

c) The FI is no exception. It must seriously reconsider its positions, carry out a process of self-criticism and cleanse its ranks from those who have capitulated to the counterrevolution. The statements of the FI on the Iranian revolution, especially during the hostage crisis, were marred by an underestimation of the counter-revolutionary offensive of the Khomeini leadership. Except on the question of the Iran-Iraq war these mistakes were never grave and on all the major open confrontations between the forces of revolution and reaction the FI as a whole stood on the side of the revolutionary proletariat. The first resolution of the USec on the war, however, by taking a defensist position on the side of the Islamic Republic opened the way for an opportunist

deviation. Indeed, some of the interpretations of this resolution developed by some sections of the FI were opportunist. This must speedily be corrected.

In Iran, a group calling itself the HKE which developed out of a split from the HKS (the Iranian section of the FI) and is still considered by some sections of the FI as being affiliated to the FI, has degenerated since this split and has crossed class lines, placing itself outside the ranks of the FI. This group fell prey to an opportunist tactic of trying to win legitimacy from the Khomeini leadership by damping down its criticism of the counter-revolution. It gradually evolved into a position of totally abandoning the revolutionary socialist programme and actually collaborating with the repressive regime. To give but a few examples, it defended the counter-revolution when Khomeini's storm troopers occupied the Iranian universities killing and imprisoning many revolutionaries. At the height of Khomeini's repression in June 1981 this group was the only group whose paper was legal and called on its members and supporters to cooperate with the "brother Pasdaran" in handing over those resisting Khomeini's terror to the forces of law and order.

The FI condemns this betrayal of its programme and dissociates itself from the HKE. In the coming World Congress of the FI the outgoing USec should move for this group to be formally expelled from the FI.

Another group, the HVK, which split from the HKE, despite the fact that it began by criticising the opportunist deviations of the HKE, nevertheless evolved in the course of a few months of its existence in exactly the same direction, capitulating to the capitalist regime, without however going as far as the HKE in denouncing its programme. This group does not exist today. Nevertheless the FI distances itself from its positions. Remaining members of this group, if they have denounced the opportunism of their past, must be reintegrated within the FI through the HKS.

Outside of Iran, the sections of the FI should organise solidarity campaigns with the struggles of the Iranian masses against Khomeini's regime and provide political and material support for the Iranian revolutionaries in exile who have to defend themselves against the forces of Khomeini's regime and the reactionary monarchist in exile.

The sections of the FI, especially those in imperialist countries, would also vigorously campaign against any attempts by imperialist powers to use the pretext of the Iran-Iraq war to strengthen their military presence or to directly intervene in the region.

On Workers and Farmers Governments

By Aurore, member of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist League, France

(This document constitutes part of the platform of the international tendency launched by 12 members of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist League, France.)

We have discussed the workers' and farmers' government in connection with the Nicaraguan revolution. It is not a new question. It played an important role in the debates of the Fourth International after World War II. In Europe, in France, we are not familiar with this question, yet this debate has marked a gain for our movement.

Comrade Joe Hansen, who was one of the main leaders of the American SWP until his death, wrote a lot on this subject, in particular in relation to Cuba. Unfortunately his texts have not yet been translated into French. They ought to be. It is not only important to know the history of our debates, nor is it for the sake of having theoretical discussions. We had a discussion on the workers' and farmers' government at the 11th World Congress. It will probably continue at the 12th.

It is a question of the moment, a political question. There are no book recipes to solve such problems, but we have acquired some important tools of analysis. We think that Joe Hansen's texts give us a method to approach such problems. It is useful to know them, to study them. We have a lot to learn from them.

In this text we want to begin raising some points which will shed some light on the current debate.

I- CUBA

The Cuban Revolution began as an anti-colonial, national liberation struggle. The July 26 Movement was in the beginning a nationalist petty-bourgeois organization. It came to power without any very definite program, or any conscious will to advance toward socialism. Yet this movement has been at the head of a revolution which led to the establishment of the first workers' state on the American continent.

The insurrection had swept away the essential components of the state apparatus of the dictatorship. But at first the Castroist leaders did not intend to move toward socialism. The government which was formed was a coalition government with representative bourgeois personalities. It was headed up by bourgeois Urrutia.

The first measures of this government were progressive but very limited--in particular the first land reform. The July 26 Movement did not aim to go beyond the framework of a bourgeois nationalist revolution. When Castro, in a 1959 interview with Playboy, condemned the nationalizations as "little realistic," it was no war trick. It was his actual state of mind.

But the dynamics of the revolution came up against these conceptions. The Cuban masses were pushing, on the basis of their victory, to go further, to extend the land reform, to take on imperialist domination. On the other hand, imperialism looked askance at the developments of the revolution and increased its pressure. This contradiction developed during 1959 and led to the crisis of October '59.

This crisis focused on the question of the government. The most significant representatives of the bourgeoisie, including Urrutia, quit the government. The chairman of the national bank, Felipe Pazzos, resigned. He was replaced by Che Guevarra. The Castroist leaders, such as Raul Castro, held the key posts from then on.

This change marked a turn in the Cuban revolution.

In a document written in July 1960, "The Character of the New Cuban Government" (1) Joe Hansen dated from that moment the advent of a workers' and farmers' government. A qualitative leap was made in October 1959. A workers' and farmers' government came into being:

"By recognizing the new Cuban government as a workers' and farmers' government, we indicate its radical petty-bourgeois background and composition and its origin in a popular mass movement, its tendency to respond to popular pressures for action against the bourgeoisie and their agents, and its capacity, for whatever immediate reasons and with whatever hesitancy, to undertake measures against bourgeois political power and against bourgeois property relations...

"This does not signify that a workers' state has been established in Cuba. What has been established is a highly contradictory and highly unstable regime, subject to pressures and impulses that can move it forward or backward."

This analysis underlines two decisive questions:

1) The change of government marks a qualitative leap in the revolution. What took place in October 1959 was the break with the bourgeoisie. The conciliation of the first months of the revolution was no longer possible. The Castroist leadership was faced with a choice: either to capitulate to the United States or to lean on the Cuban masses and to prepare to confront imperialism. But in order to confront imperialism, it was necessary to break with the bourgeoisie and to set up a government independent from the capitalists. That is what the Cuban leaders did.

2) The creation of a workers' and farmers' government does not settle everything. The decisive confrontations are still to come. The new government is a tool to break the resistance of the bourgeoisie, but the state remains capitalist. The bourgeoisie keeps the economic roots of its power. Nothing is resolved yet. Everything depends on the capacity of the new government to push forward the mobilization of the masses and to take radical measures against the capitalists. The establishment of a workers' and farmers' government does not mean that the revolution has triumphed. On the contrary, it opens up the most unstable period of the revolution. In the short run, the contradiction between the nature of the government and the class nature of the state must be settled by class struggle. The confrontation is inevitable.

The events bore out this analysis. The United States reacted violently and sought to choke the revolution. The new government responded by taking radical measures and appealing to the mass movement. In March 1960, the United States called into question the sugar quota. The government responded by taking over the first three American sugar factories. Faced with the oil blockade, the government took over Standard Oil and appealed to the Soviet Union for aid.

In April, the first Soviet tanker arrived in Cuba. In July the United States totally suspended the sugar quota. This is when the largest wave of nationalizations (26 American companies, two-thirds of the private investments in Cuba) took place. The official breaking off of relations with the United States took place five months later, but a point of no return had already been reached. A workers' state had been set up. At the April 1961 Bay of Pigs landing the imperialist offensive was to be defeated by the mobilization of an entire people determined to defend their historic conquests.

1) Hansen, Joseph, *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution*, Pathfinder Press, New York.

Several questions must be discussed here since the issues raised extend far beyond the particular case of Cuba.

II- A Lesson in Method

The Cuban revolution played a particular role in the history of our International. It was at the center of the 1963 reunification. The course of the Cuban revolution bore out vividly the theory of permanent revolution. An anti-colonial revolution, a struggle for national liberation had grown over into a socialist revolution.

In order to preserve and deepen the first conquests of the revolution, the July 26 Movement had been led to go further than its initial objectives and to embark upon the socialist path. That totally contradicted the Stalinist theory of "revolution by stages." Cuba demonstrated that there was no sharp division between national revolution and socialist revolution. In order to carry out its democratic tasks, the struggle for national liberation had to grow over into a genuine socialist revolution.

One must note an important fact: this growing over was not carried out linearly, automatically. On the contrary, the revolution deepened through successive crises: first the insurrection and Batista's fall in January 1959; then the October 1959 crisis, which marked the end of the coalition government and the establishment of the workers' and farmers' government; and at last the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a workers' state.

Only this understanding of the concrete chain of events allows for an understanding of the actual dynamics of the revolution. For in Cuba there was no Marxist revolutionary party with a clear idea of its goal and how to get there.

The July 26 Movement did not have the cohesion of a party. Moreover, it split up in the course of events. Its petty-bourgeois origin did not predispose it to lead a socialist revolution to victory. Above all, it was empirical. What was decisive was its capacity to respond--even empirically, even with hesitations--to the pressure of the Cuban masses and to break with the bourgeoisie and to utilize governmental power to forward the interests of the workers and the farmers.

Two factors played an essential role in this process. The first was the weight of objective circumstances--the collapse of the bourgeois state apparatus, the weakness of the local bourgeoisie, and a "surprise effect" on the United States. The second was the relationship between a mass movement and a leadership which, under its pressure, had been led to take hold of the governmental power, thereby enabling it to break the capitalist power. The chain of events in Cuba allows us to grasp how a petty-bourgeois leadership, in the course of a revolution, may go further than it intended along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie.

This possibility had already been raised by the Bolsheviki, more precisely by the Communist International, at the Fourth Congress of the CI. On the basis of their experience, and particularly of the experience of the German revolution, the Communist leaders in 1922 had noted the possibility of "workers' governments" coming into being which would not be "synonymous with the dictatorship of the proletariat." The "Theses on Tactics" adopted at the Fourth Congress stated:

"Such a workers' government is possible only if it comes out of the struggle of the masses and is supported by combative workers' organizations formed by the most oppressed sections of workers." (2)

2) *The First Four Congresses of the Communist International*, Ink Links, London.

That is what happened in Cuba. On the other hand, the leaders of the Communist International ruled out the possibility that such a government would set up a workers' state if it were not led by a Communist party. As a matter of fact, they specified that "the genuine workers' state" was necessarily led by the Communists. It was the "pseudonym of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

They had in mind the Russian revolution where the Bolshevik party had set up a "genuine workers' state" and established the dictatorship of the proletariat. Cuba showed that a workers' state could appear without the leadership of a Communist party. Yet, and it is remarkable, the Communist International in 1922 considered the possibility that non-Communist organizations could participate in a workers' government if the creation of such a government was the product of the mobilization of the masses. They considered the possibility that the mobilization of the workers could push such organizations further than they wanted to go.

This analysis is very important for us. It was not taken up again due to the Stalinization of the Communist International and because no concrete case presented itself in the years which followed. Hence its importance was underestimated. But this is precisely what happened in Cuba: a petty-bourgeois leadership set up a workers' and farmers' government. What was not foreseen by the Communist International was that such a government, in the absence of a genuine Communist party, would be able to overthrow capitalism.

This analysis was taken up by Trotsky in 1938 in the Transitional Program:

"However, one cannot categorically deny in advance the theoretical possibility that, under the influence of completely exceptional circumstances (war, defeat, financial crash, mass revolutionary pressure, etc.), the petty-bourgeois parties, including the Stalinists, may go further than they themselves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie. In any case, one thing is not to be doubted: even if this highly improbable variant somewhere, at some time, becomes a reality and the workers' and farmers' government in the above-mentioned sense is established in fact, it would represent merely a short episode on the road to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat."

This "highly improbable variant" took place in Cuba. More generally, this variant gives a coherent theoretical framework to explain the revolutionary upheavals which took place following World War II and which led to the establishment of new workers' states in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, and in China.

III- "Exceptional Circumstances"

In the International Internal Discussion Bulletin No. 2 [BIID French-language bulletin] comrade Roman, who polemicalizes with comrades Jerome and Matti (3) writes:

"I think that once and for all we should bury such expressions as 'exceptional conditions or circumstances.' Instead of helping to clarify the problem with which we are confronted, they obscure it even further. Exceptional means...that it is an exception. Now, we are discussing all the victorious revolutions up to today...with the exception of the Russian revolution.

"The absurd (and fetishist) way in which this term is used comes through in this quotation from Jerome and Matti: 'It is important to underline what comrade Mandel

3) Jerome and Matti, "Contribution to the Debate on Castroism and the Fourth International," *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. XVII, No. 2.

himself admits, namely that "exceptional circumstances" have been the rule, not only in each of the revolutions at hand, but also as a general characteristic which has marked the whole post-war period' (i.e., the survival of Stalinism).

"The exception therefore has been the rule! It is not surprising that common mortals occasionally find it difficult to understand our debates! Let us recognize once and for all that we have been discussing the general course of the colonial revolution for about six decades--that every revolutionary crisis has been the expression of a combination of so-called "exceptional" circumstances (particularly with regard to the crisis of the bourgeoisie) and that the ritualistic reference to "exceptional circumstances" explains nothing. So let's stop using this term."(4)

In an ironic tone comrade Roman gets nevertheless to the bottom of the question. At first it may seem absurd to assert that "the exception has been the rule," but yet this is precisely what has happened. The "highly improbable variant" envisaged by Trotsky has become a reality. It has repeated itself several times since World War II. It is the product of "exceptional circumstances" in each particular case, but it is above all the product of an exceptional historical circumstance, of a historical variant which had not been foreseen by Trotsky--and yet did occur.

Trotsky had not foreseen that the crisis of leadership of the proletariat would extend for over 40 years after World War II. He did not foresee the temporary strengthening of Stalinism following the war. This "exceptional circumstance" is quite fundamental: The mighty post-war revolutionary wave developed itself in the framework of the strengthening of Stalinism on a world-wide scale.

Counterrevolutionary Stalinist parties, in the absence of revolutionary parties rooted in the mass movements, have been brought, under "exceptional circumstances" (weakening of imperialism, pressure of the masses) to go further than they had wanted along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie.

Stalin himself contributed to overthrowing capitalism in Eastern Europe. In spite of that he did not stop being a counterrevolutionary. The Yalta accords were a lesser evil for imperialism. The overthrow of capitalism in Eastern Europe was above all the product of the revolutionary movement of the masses. Stalin limited this movement as much as possible. He could not prevent it, but he limited it as much as possible by setting up bureaucratically deformed workers' states in these countries and by smashing all independent expressions of the mass movement. He limited it as much as possible for these victories were paid for by the defeats of the revolution in Greece, in France, and in Italy.

In the same way one cannot consider that Mao stopped being a Stalinist just because the CCP found itself at the head of the Chinese revolution. When the peasant armies won in 1949 the CCP, which had led the guerrilla struggle, filled the political vacuum that existed after the collapse of the Japanese imperialism and Chiang Kai-shek's rout.

The CCP set up a coalition government with bourgeois groups and did everything, at first, to limit the mobilization of the masses. Even the land reform was not extended to the territories which had been liberated. The avowed goal of the CCP was to set up a "popular democracy" in collaboration with the national bourgeoisie, i.e., quite in the Stalinist tradition of completing "the democratic stage of the revolution."

These declarations were not simply for show. All the actions of the CCP during that period correspond to this objective: limiting the workers' demands, associating the land

4) Roman, "The Vietnamese CP and the Leaderships of the Colonial Revolution: Old and New Debates," *IIDB*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, p. 32.

owners and the rich peasants to the local governments... Nor was it a matter of hesitating or proceeding cautiously. Mao had had a long experience of governmental management in the liberated zones before 1949.

It was simply the expression of the political will to limit the revolution to a "democratic stage." Yet the dynamics of the Chinese revolution was in contradiction with the theories and the will of the CCP. The Korean War, which began in June 1950, compelled the CCP to react. China's entry into the war in November 1950 and the necessity of fighting against imperialism led the CCP to break its ties with the bourgeoisie and to lean bureaucratically on some forms of mass mobilizations.

Peasant committees were reorganized. There was a genuine turn to the left, a development of the land reform, and an offensive against the land owners. A workers' and farmers' government was set up. It is this government that took decisive anti-capitalist measures and established a workers' state.

In spite of all this, the CCP has not ceased to be a Stalinist party, and it is not far-fetched to say that the Chinese socialist revolution was carried out against its will. The CCP has remained Stalinist in the revolution. It set up a bureaucratically deformed workers' state. Once in power, it carried out typically Stalinist policies at home and abroad.

To say that a party is Stalinist, hence counterrevolutionary, does not mean that it seeks everywhere and at all times the victory of imperialism. The CCP was committed to the struggle against Japanese imperialism and it sought to develop the national liberation struggle in which it played a decisive role. But as a Stalinist party its goal was not to extend the world socialist revolution. On the contrary, it sought to limit the revolution within a democratic framework.

"Exceptional circumstances"--Chiang Kai-shek's rout, the defeat of the Japanese, the strength of the movement of the armed masses, then the beginning of the Cold War and the necessity of countering the U.S. imperialist offensive, all of this led the CCP to go further than it wanted.

One must take these facts into account in order to explain the Chinese revolution coherently. We do not have to rectify our analysis of the nature of the CCP. We have at our disposal a coherent analytical framework. We can explain how an "improbable variant" took place in China. We can also understand why this variant took place so often after World War II, and what the "exceptional circumstances" are which have caused this detour of history.

On the contrary, it is far harder to admit in the framework of our program and our theoretical gains that the Chinese CP, trained in the Stalinist school, had become a genuine revolutionary party and became Stalinist again only in 1966-67 with the Cultural Revolution. Such a conception disarms us in our understanding of the continuity of the Stalinist politics of the CCP given that there is a coherence in its brutal turns in foreign policy and in its relation to the internal bureaucratic regime in China. This is what we call the politics of "socialism in one country."

Similarly, the Sino-Soviet split cannot be interpreted as a conflict between Stalinism and Mao (who reproduced, and sometimes caricatured, Stalin's own ways), but rather as a truly spectacular manifestation of the crisis of Stalinism which was fueled by the rise of the Chinese revolution.

The continuing crisis of the leadership of the world proletariat has caused the course of the revolution to choose some detours. This does not mean that the crisis of the leadership has been overcome somehow or other. The workers of Eastern Europe, the Chinese, Vietnamese masses, and even the Cuban people have paid and continue to pay for this historical delay in the formation of a world revolutionary leadership.

History has not chosen the way which had been foreseen by our movement. There was an exceptional historical circumstance, which we must take into account. This delay has caused numerous debates and great confusion in the Fourth International and in the Trotskyist movement.

The theoretical framework provided by the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, taken up again by Trotsky in 1938 and developed by Joe Hansen in the light of the post-war revolutionary experiences and of the Cuban Revolution, allows for a coherent account of these phenomena. This method enables us to avoid grievous errors; either opportunistic ones (like some currents which adapted to Maoism on the basis that Mao had led a revolution) or sectarian ones (like the Lambertists who took 20 years to recognize the existence of a workers' state in Cuba). This framework gives us a method to analyze these revolutions and to immerse ourselves more deeply into the on-going revolutions without having to "prettify" or embellish the nature of the leaderships--without adapting ourselves to them.

In Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, and Cuba, leaderships which were not Trotskyist have been led to overthrow capitalism. In the case of Cuba there was a decisive difference: Castro and his movement were not Stalinist. They were to the left of Stalinism. They were not counterrevolutionary. For the first time since 1917, in Cuba, a non-Stalinist leadership was at the head of a victorious socialist revolution. This fact is of considerable historical importance. This influenced entire generations of young revolutionists and we have not yet seen all its consequences.

IV- A New Norm?

Stating that "the exception has been the rule" does not mean that there is a new norm for the revolution, or even for the colonial revolution.

The post-war revolutionary wave coincided with a strengthening of Stalinism, but every victory has nurtured the contradictions of Stalinism. Every Stalinist party in power has called into play for its own sake the logics of socialism within one country. The "polycentrism" has been a powerful driving force of the crisis of Stalinism.

Moreover, the advent of new workers' states has strengthened the struggle of the world proletariat and weakened the domination of imperialism. The "exceptional" conditions which marked a whole historical period after the war have begun to change under the influence of the joint crisis of imperialism and Stalinism.

The rise of the revolution in the three sectors opens up a more favorable period. The victory of the Cuban Revolution, the revolutionary developments in Central America, the rise of the political revolution, the advent of movements such as the Workers Party (PT) in Brazil or Solidarity in Poland, the advances of the class struggle in capitalist Europe, all bear witness to the maturing of a new, deeper and more proletarian wave of the class struggle, and indicate a partial loss of control of the old leaderships, especially of the Stalinists, over the new generations. Everything indicates that the upcoming revolutions will tend to come nearer to the classic norms, as opposed to depart from them. The Polish revolution gives us a clue: We are going to resume our ties with the October tradition.

Our program, our gains, give us a method to grasp the continuity of the revolutionary movement in the decades which have just passed. History has taken detours but there has been no break. We are still in the same historical period. Our theoretical gains have been borne out and they allow us to understand what has happened. We do not have to bring into question our theoretical gains. They have proved themselves in very difficult circumstances.

We must study Joe Hansen's texts on Cuba. They give us a method, not only theory, but a method for political action. These questions are very relevant. We discuss them in regard to Cuba and Nicaragua: How to position ourselves in relation to leaderships which are not Trotskyist, without sectarianism, without withholding our support, but also without adapting ourselves to them--keeping on our course of building the Fourth International. Here we do not start from the beginning. We have experience which we can base ourselves on.

V- The Case of Algeria

In its first phase the Algerian revolution presents a lot of similarities to the Cuban revolution. It was a national liberation struggle led by an organization of petty-bourgeois origin--the FLN. The FLN was not a united organization. It was not a party. Inside there were very different tendencies: radical elements coming from the petty-bourgeoisie of the cities; nationalist bourgeois forces led by Ferhat Abbas; feudal tribe chiefs; and religious Arabs firmly rooted in Islam.

The signing of the Evian Accords in March 1962 marked the definitive defeat of French imperialism and the victory of the Algerian masses led by the FLN. Yet the French government hoped, thanks to this accord, to maintain a neo-colonial presence and to curb the national liberation struggle.

After the victory, the FLN was confronted with a choice: either to accept the framework of the Evian accords and to limit the revolution, or to continue and to deepen the struggle and to move forward toward a total break with imperialism.

In May 1962 a meeting of the FLN leadership took place. Everybody did not agree on the objectives. The most radical position defended by Ben Bella and supported by militants of the left wing such as Mohamed Harbi had the majority. A radical program known as the "Tripoli program" was adopted. This program denounced the Evian accords as a neo-colonialist platform.

It called for the overthrow of the feudal structures, and advocated the abolition of the power of the monopolies, a radical land reform, and an economic development program based on a policy of nationalizations and of state planning. This program insisted on the necessity of developing the mobilization of the masses, especially of women and youth, and on the collaboration with the anti-imperialist colonial movement. It proclaimed clearly that the goal of the revolution was socialism.

The adoption of this revolutionary program immediately led to conflicts within the FLN. Two groups opposed each other: the first one led by Ben Bella and supported at first by Boumediene, the organizer of the ALN (National Liberation Army); the second one led by Ben Khedda, the president of the provisional government, supported by Ferhat Abbas who defended a solution of cooperation with France along the lines of the Tunisia-Bourguiba pact.

There was mass support for Ben Bella's proposals, and on September 25, 1962, the Ben Bella government was set up.

As early as the summer of 1962 the new government took a series of measures to counter the sabotage of the imperialists: a decree on the "abandoned properties" in August 1962; a decree on the farms abandoned in October. The climax of the revolution was reached in 1963 with the "March decrees."

In response to a French nuclear test in the Sahara, Ben Bella took a series of radical measures. He decreed the permanent status of the nationalized sector, the nationalization of all vacant properties, the creation of the ONRA (National Office of the Land Reform), the development and generalization of self-management. In October 1963 the French ownership on the land, which represented 60 percent of the agricultural production, was abolished. In September 1963 a new constitution was adopted and Ben Bella was elected president.

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International noted in a resolution of February 1964:

"...the promulgation of the March 1963 decrees and the successive departure of Khider, Ferhat Abbas, and other bourgeois leaders--although some right-wing elements remain in the government. These changes mark the end of the coalition and the establishment of a workers' and farmers' government."

In fact the measures taken by Ben Bella brought about a complete split in the FLN. Khider and Ferhat Abbas went into opposition. Anti-government guerrilla groups began to appear. The confrontation with the bourgeoisie had begun. In that situation Ben Bella and the left wing of the FLN had no other possible support than the mass movement. They had no other solution than to do as Castro, who had called on the Cuban masses to mobilize against the offensive of the bourgeoisie.

But Ben Bella was not Castro. He locked himself within the internal debates of the FLN, seeking conciliation and unity. Unlike Castro he did not take the means to break the resistance of the bourgeoisie.

Like Cuba in 1960, Algeria remained a bourgeois state. The workers' and farmers' government was in contradiction with the class nature of the state. The bourgeoisie, even though weak, had the means to use its remaining power to attack the government. In order to face this danger, it was necessary to mobilize the masses, as Castro did, to overthrow capitalism definitively, and to establish a workers' state.

Ben Bella did not move in that direction. He hesitated. From then on he was himself undermining the foundation of his government. The economic crisis deepened, unemployment went up, and the emigration of the jobless to France increased. This latter fact in turn strengthened the pressure of French imperialism, which had drawn lessons from Cuba and was avoiding a direct aggression that could radicalize the revolution.

In the factories and in the farms the revolution marked time. Since the bourgeoisie was not overthrown, self-management did not actually benefit the workers. On the contrary it became a cause of disorganization of the economy. So the government started to lose its popular support. The masses were thrown back into passivity.

At the FLN congress in April 1964 a new rift came about with Boumedienne, who was in charge of the ALN, relying more and more on the state bureaucracy in full development.

In the absence of a developed national bourgeoisie, this layer of petty-bourgeois bureaucrats was the only force that could take advantage of the situation. To this end it had to stop the course of the revolution and establish its own power. This is what happened when Boumediene overthrew Ben Bella on June 19, 1965. This coup was not opposed in any significant way, not even by the left wing, itself already largely demoralized by the Ben Bella government.

The overthrow of the workers' and farmers' government marked a real right turn. Many gains were put into question. Workers and democratic organizations were banned, nationalized farms were returned to their owners. Capitalism began to lift its head again.

The course of the revolution in Algeria has borne out the lessons of Cuba. The FLN, like the July 26 Movement, was the petty-bourgeois leadership of a national liberation struggle. That leadership went further than its initial objectives and set up a workers' and farmers' government.

The dynamic of the Algerian revolution was the same as that of the Cuban revolution. It was the dynamic of permanent revolution. But there is a new element in the case of Algeria: A workers' and farmers' government was set up that looked a lot like the Cuban government, but contrary to Cuba, that government did not lead to the establishment of a workers' state.

This fact is fundamental. It clearly indicates that a workers' and farmers' government does not lead automatically to the overthrow of capitalism. In Algeria, like in Cuba, governments independent of the bourgeoisie were set up. These governments were in contradiction with the class nature of the state which remained capitalist. This contradiction cannot continue indefinitely. It is settled in one way or another by the class struggle. As Trotsky had specified it in the Transitional Program: "Such governments would represent merely a short episode on the road to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat." Otherwise they are doomed to be overthrown by the bourgeoisie.

This means from the political point of view that nothing is settled in advance. The establishment of a workers' and farmers' government does not settle beforehand the outcome of the struggle. Everything depends on the capacity and also on the will of this government to break the resistance of the bourgeoisie.

Among the reasons for the defeat of the Algerian revolution one must of course take into account the attitude of the French imperialism, warned by the Cuban experience. The French imperialists were able to avoid the mistakes made by U.S. imperialism. But the main reason remains the behavior of the Ben Bella leadership, which did not dare to call on the movement of the masses as Castro had done.

The decisive factor was indeed the crisis of leadership--the lack of a revolutionary party. It is a lesson for us: Nothing guarantees that leaderships which have established a workers' and farmers' government will be capable of definitively overthrowing the bourgeoisie. The fact that leaderships of petty-bourgeois origin go "under exceptional circumstances" further than they wanted and find themselves at the head of a social revolution is in a certain sense the product of the historic crisis of the leadership of the proletariat.

The emergence of these leaderships, however, does not thereby mean that the crisis of leadership has been resolved. In the case of Algeria the overthrow of the Ben Bella

government revealed that the crisis of leadership remained. In Cuba it has been overcome, but only partially. The isolation of the Cuban revolution; the internal difficulties of the revolution (the problem of workers' democracy); the mistakes, sometimes serious of the Cuban leadership (Czechoslovakia, Poland); are the result of the continuation of this crisis.

Supporting unconditionally these leaderships against imperialism, as our International has done in an exemplary fashion, is the first task of the Trotskyists. Giving them political support when they move forward is right, but it is impossible to rely blindly on them for the future of the revolution. Building a revolutionary party, regrouping Trotskyist cadres, is indispensable to have an impact on the course of the revolution. It is the greatest contribution the Trotskyists can make. Moreover, this was the lesson drawn by the Fourth International in the resolution of the IEC plenum in 1969:

"The lesson of the Algerian events is of considerable importance. The victory of the socialist revolution in Algeria was possible. But a decisive factor was missing--the revolutionary party.

"In the context of this self-criticism one must also frankly say that if the participation of the Trotskyist movement in the Algerian revolution, including its material support to the struggle and its backing of the most progressive tendency after 1962, was considerable, too little was done to take on the specific role of the Trotskyist movement - to form the nucleus of a future revolutionary Algerian party - the work of training and recruiting Algerian militants was neglected in favor of an orientation to the leadership.

"Undoubtedly during the first phase, given the smallness of our forces it was correct to concentrate on a campaign of practical support to the revolution, which created a favorable ground for spreading of our ideas. But after a certain point the formation of an organized nucleus had to become the priority and all the work within the leadership should have been subordinated to that goal".

There were different assessments in our movement as to how to date the advent of a workers' and farmers government in Algeria. The USec placed the qualitative leap in 1963 with the March decrees. The SWP comrades placed it in 1962 when the Ben Bella government replaced the provisional government. At this point we will not discuss who was right. The main thing is the agreement which came about in the analysis of an on-going revolution.

Joe Hansen noted the following about Cuba in 1961:

"On coming to power the July 26 Movement set up a coalition government which comprised, and not in secondary posts, well-known bourgeois-democratic figures. Retrospectively they could have passed off as decorations for the middle classes, as a camouflage hiding the true nature of the government. It is more pertinent, I think, to consider this government as corresponding to the political goals of the revolution such as they were conceived at that time by its leaders." (1)

The Algerian experience has shown that this approach was correct. Nothing was settled in advance. The destruction of the colonial state apparatus did not settle everything. As long as the foundations of the state remained capitalist, the bourgeoisie would keep open the possibility of restoring its power. There was no fatalism, no

1) Hansen, Joseph, *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution*, Pathfinder Press, New York.

automatism in the course of a revolution. It is necessary to be cautious, to go slowly when it comes to characterizations. The notion of workers' and farmers' government is precious for it allows us to acknowledge a qualitative leap while keeping in mind that the decisive showdown is still to come.

V1- Workers' and farmers' government and dual power

In the name of the Political Bureau of the LCR comrade Segur gave a report "on the discussion in the international" to the Central Committee [of the LCR] on March 28, 1982. This report was published in the International Internal Discussion Bulletin No. 2. [BIID, French-language version] His report was devoted to an assessment of the differences in the International after the SWP plenum. We do not know the exact positions of the SWP comrades, because Doug Jenness's and Jack Barnes' documents have not been published in French yet. However the report given by comrade Segur already raised some questions. The comrade wrote:

"On the workers' and farmers' government. (...) Behind this question there is a fairly complex historical and theoretical debate which could merit a report of its own. It stems from a real difficulty.

"A consolidated workers' state may be defined by a combination of factors, roughly the nature of the political power and the social relations of property and production. In history when a workers' state is established, when class power passes over to another class power, these criteria do not necessarily coincide. A certain delay may occur between the conquest of political power by the proletariat, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, and the establishment of a planned economy.

"This is especially true in the case of colonial and semi-colonial countries where the revolution starts with democratic tasks to grow over into the socialist revolution. The theory of permanent revolution does not deny these differences between the beginning and the final outcome of the revolution. It rules out any formalized stage, any Chinese wall between these democratic tasks and the socialist tasks - which inevitably start to overlap.

"In order to solve this difficulty Trotsky used two notions. The first, dual power, was worked out in detail in a chapter of his 'History of the Russian Revolution'. It gives the best account of the passing of political power from one class to another, in all its complexity. To avoid long quotations here, I refer you to the original. The second, the workers' and farmers' government was defined in the Transitional Program as a 'short episode' toward the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the International different traditions developed in the use of these ideas."

If there is a "real difficulty," comrade Segur's report does not help to overcome it. Trotsky supposedly used two notions: one of "dual power" in the "History of the Russian Revolution" and one of "workers' and farmers' government" in the Transitional Program. We are also told that "different traditions in the use of these notions" developed in the International, with the American comrades stressing workers' and farmers' government and the "majority" emphasizing dual power. Such a presentation cannot seriously clarify "a fairly complex historical and theoretical debate". In fact it rather tends to confuse it.

It is true that Trotsky used the two notions, but to speak of two different things.

In the "Russian Revolution" what Trotsky spoke of is the dual power as a decisive element of the revolutionary crisis before the Bolsheviks took power. Confronted with the bourgeois state, the Russian masses set up representative bodies, the Soviets, which constituted the basis of an alternative power to that of the bourgeoisie.

The whole problem of the revolution was to solve this situation of dual power and to wrest the levers of central political power from the bourgeoisie. This approach was concentrated in the Bolsheviks' slogan: "All power to the Soviets". History has shown that this phenomenon was not specifically Russian. To a greater or lesser degree, played out sometimes in different forms, this happened over and over in all revolutionary experiences: Germany, China, Spain, Cuba, Chile, Portugal....

The Russian Revolution remains the most "classic" example of dual power but, at the same time, this notion may be extended. For instance it may be applied to the political revolution in a bureaucratically degenerated or deformed worker's state as in the case of Poland. From the summer of 1980 until Jaruzelski's coup a situation of dual power had begun to appear.

It was not a matter of class power passing over to another class power, but of a confrontation, in a workers' state, between the working class organized in Solidarity and the state apparatus of the parasitic bureaucracy. This situation was temporarily resolved to the advantage of the bureaucratic counterrevolution, but the rise of the mass movement will inevitably bring a resurgence of the movement.

In Cuba, in 1959-60, there was also a situation of dual power, even though it did not take on the "classic" soviet form. But limiting our observation to this is insufficient. Following the victory in January 1959 there was already dual power. After the October 1959 crisis there was still dual power.

But a qualitative change had taken place after the removal of the bourgeoisie from political power. Dual power still existed because the state remained capitalist and the bourgeoisie retained most of the economic power. That situation was settled only with the overthrow of capitalism by the Castro-Guevara government and the establishment of a workers' state in Cuba.

The entire question is concentrated here : What was the nature of that government which had been able to take such measures? Was it a bourgeois government like the Urrutia government? Obviously not! It was a government independent of the bourgeoisie--a workers' and farmers' government.

This is the key problem of the discussion. The notion of dual power is precious but it does not allow us to understand this specific point . The revolutionary process in Cuba did not unfold in a linear way. A leadership of petty-bourgeois origin conquered governmental power, hence it had at its disposal the possibility to use this tool to forward the aspirations of the masses against imperialist domination.

The workers' and farmers' government constitutes a decisive link in the chain of events. It is not a secondary or happenstance occurrence. The establishment of this government qualitatively modified the relationship of forces between classes. It opened up the possibility of overthrowing capitalism. One cannot dissolve this into the general notion of dual power. The crisis of dual power was not solved with the establishment of the Castro-Guevara government. But did that crisis present itself in the same way as before? Did or did not the existence of the new government modify the conditions of the confrontation? What was the nature of the government that took the

measures to overthrow capitalism? These are the real questions.

Comrade Segur makes things even more confusing when he writes:

"For Cuba and for China, the American comrades have spoken at first of workers and farmers' government, as the first steps toward the consolidation of workers' states. Therefore one can conclude that these were no longer bourgeois states. The majority has rather emphasized dual power (which implies that the outcome is still to be decided)." (5)

We have already quoted from Joe Hansen's July 1960 article, "The Character of the New Cuban Government." This article analyzed the new government as a workers' and farmers' government. We refer to Hansen one more time:

"This does not signify that a workers' state has been established in Cuba. What has been established is a highly contradictory and highly unstable regime, subject to pressures and impulses that can move it forward or backward." (1)

Ten years later, in July 1970, Joe Hansen came back to that question in a letter to Bob Chester:

"I think that we have to regard a 'workers and farmers government'...as a highly transitional phenomenon. The establishment of such a government by no means leads inevitably to the establishment of a workers' state as we have seen in the case of Algeria. What is most decisive is its practice in relation to the capitalist state structure on which it rests." (6)

It is thus clear that one cannot infer that for the American comrades "these were no longer bourgeois states". The characterization of "workers' and farmers' government" is meant to indicate that "the outcome is still to come." Thus it is not "a first step toward the consolidation of workers' states," but a qualitative step along the line which leads to the overthrow of capitalism.

The workers' and farmers' government is in contradiction with the class nature of the state. That is what explains its unstable and necessarily transitional character. This notion is not contradictory to the one of dual power. It indicates that a qualitative step has been taken in a situation of dual power. Nevertheless, the notion of dual power retains its validity, but it does take this specific fact into account. It is important not to mix everything up.

VII- Workers' and Farmers' Governments and Permanent Revolution

In the passage of comrade Segur's report we have quoted from there is another aspect which is unclear:

"It is above all in the colonial and semi-colonial countries where the revolution starts with democratic tasks and grows over into socialist revolution. The theory of permanent revolution does not deny these differences between the beginning and the outcome of the revolution. The theory of permanent revolution does not deny these differences between the beginning and the outcome of the revolution. It rules out any formalized stage, any Chinese wall between these democratic tasks and the socialist tasks, which inevitably begin to overlap each other." (5)

5) Segur, "Report on the Discussion in the International," *Communist Critique. Discussion Bulletin*, No. 2. (French).

6) Hansen, Joseph, *The Workers and Farmers Government*, Education for Socialists Bulletin, Pathfinder Press, New York.

The permanent revolution denies any Chinese wall between democratic tasks and socialist ones. This is absolutely true. It is best exemplified by the Cuban Revolution: In order to carry out to the end its democratic tasks, it grew over into socialist revolution. The Castroist leadership of nationalist petty-bourgeois origin was led to set up a workers' and farmers' government which overthrew capitalism in Cuba.

On the other hand, comrade Segur introduces confusion when he writes that the theory of permanent revolution "rules out any formalized stage". Maybe it is just a question of vocabulary. One must understand what is meant by "formalized." In any event, there was a formalized stage in Cuba: The establishment of the workers' and farmers' government constituted a stage in relation to the Urrutia government. This stage was indeed formalized since it took on the form of the replacement of one government by another.

What is decisive, however, is that it is not a stable stage. It was highly unstable and transitional. The Cuban and Algerian experiences have shown it was impossible to stabilize a workers' and farmers' government. Either it overthrows capitalism or it is overthrown by it. There is no alternative.

The theory of the workers' and farmers' government is not contradictory to permanent revolution. On the contrary, it is part and parcel of it and goes totally counter to the Stalinist theories of "advanced democracy," of "revolution by stages." The advent of a workers' and farmers' government in Cuba meant it was not possible any longer to maintain the revolution in a democratic framework. It started to move toward socialist. The workers' and farmers' government has been a link in the course of the permanent revolution in Cuba. Its existence was the surest clue of the socialist growing-over of the revolution.

On another level, the notion of workers' and farmers' government is totally opposed to the notion of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" which was used by Lenin. This conception was dangerous because it opened up the possibility of a stable lasting stage in the revolution.

Besides, it was abandoned by Lenin in April 1917 with the April Theses, which opened the prospect of immediate struggle for socialism. Afterwards in the Russian Revolution, when Lenin and the Bolsheviks raised the slogan "All power to the Soviets" and demanded that the SR and Mensheviks break with the capitalist ministers, what they were doing was demanding that they "move toward the workers' and farmers' government". This no longer had anything to do with the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry." When the Bolsheviks once again took up the discussion on the "workers' government" at the Fourth congress, that is what it was about.

One must examine yet another question: Is the notion of workers' and farmers' government exclusively linked to the revolution in the oppressed countries? The answer is no. The permanent revolution is not a phenomenon specific to the colonial countries. It is above all a theory of the dynamics of the world revolution which takes into account the differences between the sectors of the revolution, but expresses its unity.

The "workers' and farmers' government" is an element of this theory. Of course there are differences between oppressed and imperialist countries from the point of view of class alliances and of the weight of the peasantry, hence the variants in vocabulary: "workers and farmers government" or "workers government."

But that changes nothing as far as the method is concerned. When the Communist

International discussed "workers' and farmers' governments" at its Fourth congress, the discussion mainly concerned the application of this notion to the imperialist countries. When Trotsky speaks of the "workers' and farmers' government" in the Transitional Program, it is not solely a question for the oppressed countries. For Trotsky it is indeed a general programmatic question.

There are two aspects to this question: The workers' and farmers' government as a slogan (which must be concretized in each specific case):

"Of all the parties and organizations which base themselves on the workers and peasants and speak in their name, we demand that they break politically from the bourgeoisie and enter upon the road of struggle for the workers' and farmers' government". (7)

This approach is irreplaceable in the imperialist countries where we are confronted with the old social-democratic and Stalinist leaderships. In France where we are confronted with a popular front. We demand from the CP and SP that they break their links with the bosses, that they break their alliances with the Radicals and Gaullists and that they form a government of their own parties: a CP-SP government.

The second aspect is to know whether the establishment of a "workers' and farmers' government," in the sense indicated above, is a possibility to be envisaged in an imperialist country. The answer is yes. The Communist International had discussed the problem because partial experiences in that direction had taken place in Germany during the revolution (CP-left centrist governments had come about in a number of "Laender").

It is an "improbable" variant but once cannot rule it out categorically. The crisis of leadership, the fact that there are not yet mass revolutionary parties in the imperialist countries, leaves open such a possibility. One can imagine for instance a predominantly centrist government which moves toward a break with the bourgeoisie.

The problem is not to write political fiction. The main thing is to see that one cannot altogether discard such a possibility. One must insist on the fact that it is not inevitable. It is even far from being the likeliest variant, but it can happen. What is sure on the other hand is that the extension of the revolution in the imperialist countries will make it easier to pass quickly over to socialism, and that this will also further the development of the colonial revolution and its growing over into socialist revolution.

VII- The Workers' and Farmers' Government in Nicaragua

We have had a discussion on Nicaragua. We will not again take up all the arguments. One can refer to the document "Nicaragua: Why We Went Slowly?" (8) Nevertheless we must briefly review some of the points made in that document.

We have criticized the position of the SWP comrades who have explained that there was a workers' and farmers' government in Nicaragua since Somoza's overthrow. This assertion contradicts the facts. The government which was formed following the victory was not independent of the bourgeoisie.

Within the Junta and the State council the national bourgeoisie occupied an important and not at all ornamental place. The leaders of the "anti-Somoza" bourgeoisie were aware of that and they multiplied the declarations of "loyalty" to the revolution. This coalition government was indeed bourgeois. It was in contradiction with the aspirations

7) *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, Pathfinder Press, New York.

8) Aurore, Herve, Legolfe, Malika, Mathieu, Matti, Titus (members of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist League, France, "Nicaragua: Why We Went Slowly," *IIDB*, No. 3 (French).

of the Nicaraguan masses who sought to extend the land reform, who demanded wage increases and the improvement of their working conditions.

This contradiction led to a crisis which started with Chamorro's and Robelo's resignation, two representative figures of the national bourgeoisie, from the Junta and which ended with the 11 bourgeois representatives leaving the Council of State on November 12, 1980. This break marked the end of the coalition and the establishment by the FSLN of a workers' and farmers' government.

The position defended by the SWP comrades was wrong. It did not correspond to the reality of the situation. It did not allow for an understanding of why there was a crisis and why that crisis had focused on the question of the government and the State Council.

It did not allow for an understanding of the qualitative leap which had taken place in the revolution. That position was also wrong from the point of view of the method. Contrary to Joe Hansen's attitude about Cuba, the American comrades have not waited for the events to unfold to say there was a workers' and farmers' government. They took a bet on the course of the revolution. They believed that things were settled in advance because the Sandinists were leading. We preferred to base our analysis on the facts.

We have also criticized the position of the [USec] majority, which refused to give a class characterization of the first government in Nicaragua [after the July revolution]. The majority was content to speak of a coalition government, without saying whether it was bourgeois or not. They then spoke of a workers' and farmers' government from September 1980.

That position was incoherent. It did not arm us to understand the real dynamic of the revolution, nor the nature of the confrontation with the bourgeoisie in the fall of 1980. And this is so because the class struggle did not pursue its course outside of the government. This was not a secondary question. It concentrated the confrontation with the bourgeoisie in the fall of 1980.

Did the bourgeoisie have any hold on political power? This was at the center of the conflict which came to a head when the FSLN, supporting itself on the workers' mobilizations, countered the bourgeois offensive by setting up a workers' and farmers' government.

The course of events in Nicaragua since then has confirmed that indeed there had been a turn in the political situation.

U.S. imperialism was not mistaken. It stepped up its aggression considerably against the revolution. It began a real war in Central America. It deepened its involvement in El Salvador by linking it to a military and economic offensive against Nicaragua.

At the end of December 80, Standard Fruit decided to stop its activities in Nicaragua. On January 23, 1981, \$75 million in economic assistance was definitively suspended. In March the credits to buy wheat on the American market were stopped. From that moment on the attacks of counterrevolutionaries have increased.

On June 15 there were six dead in Pitiya. In one year, these attacks grew to the point of becoming a real border war with Honduras. In 1982 the clashes have occurred almost daily. In July 1980 Eden Pastora, "Comandante Zero," broke with the revolution and left Nicaragua. On October 22, 1980, the president of COSEP, Enrique Dreyfus, was arrested with other leaders of COSEP. He was accused of having violated the laws on the

economic state of emergency.

The possibility of a direct military intervention was raised openly by the U.S. rulers as of 1981. In early 82, the incidents of confrontation with the bourgeoisie's daily newspaper, "La Prensa," increased. The paper was shut down several times. In March 1982, for the first time in 23 years, NATO air force and navy maneuvers took place in the Caribbean.

At the same time imperialism launched a campaign against the "genocide of the Miskitos" and two bridges were blown up on the Honduran border. That is the moment that French imperialism chose to slow down its (albeit very minimal) delivery of military aid to Nicaragua. In May the president of the central bank, Alfredo Cesar, resigned. In June, Eden Pastora was welcomed in Lisbon by Mario Soares, where he accused the Sandinistas of having "betrayed the revolution" and having become "submissive to Soviet imperialism."

In face of an offensive of such magnitude, the workers' and farmers' government led by the Sandinistas sought support in the mobilization of the masses and deepened the course of the revolution. The Sandinistas called for broadening the peoples' militias. As early as January 1981 there was a mobilization of 100,000 people in Managua for the militia.

Today Nicaragua has become a stronghold defended by an armed people. In order to get weapons and to counter the imperialist blockade, the Sandinistas have turned toward the workers' states--toward Cuba, toward the USSR. That help is indispensable for the survival of the revolution. Ortega invited Brezhnev to Managua. This is important inasmuch as the revolution needs help from the USSR.

The Sandinistas have also mobilized the masses against the agents of imperialism operating inside Nicaragua. They have deepened the social gains of the revolution. They have built schools, hospitals. They are building a hydro-electrical infra-structure, and have extended the land reform and the nationalizations. They have increased their support to the Salvadoran revolutionaries.

The Sandinists have also made compromises. We must not criticize them for that. It was correct and necessary. They sought to keep in touch with a petty-bourgeois layer of technicians and engineers indispensable to the revolution.

They have used imperialism's contradictions to their advantage. It was correct for them to do so. Lopez Portillo's plan was a capitalist platform, but it helped to divide imperialism and to increase the problems confronting the United States, thus making a military intervention against Nicaragua and Cuba much harder.

They also played on the contradictions of the Socialist International. This was also correct. The exemplary attitude of the Sandinists in relation of the Malvinas war contributed to deepen imperialism's crisis of domination in Latin America. Argentina had agreed upon sending troops to Central America. In January 1982, the United States launched in San Jose, Costa Rica, the "Central American Democratic Community" inspired by the TIAR. For the United States it was a "first step toward actions of collective security." In fact it was a war machine against the revolution in Central America. Today it is harder to get such organizations to work on behalf of U.S. imperialism.

Compromises were and still are necessary because the revolution is in a difficult situation. It is still isolated. It needs revolutionary victories in El Salvador and

Guatemala. Yet the showdown is inevitable. The workers' and farmers' government cannot last long. The situation is very unstable: either the Sandinista government will take measures to overthrow the bourgeoisie or it itself will be overthrown. There is no intermediate solution. Everything points to the fact that the Sandinistas orient themselves toward overthrowing capitalism, but nothing is played out in advance and there are problems.

When Tomas Borge declares in front of half a million people in Managua for the second anniversary of the revolution that "the revolution has put forth the strategy of mixed economy," this is a problem. The mixed economy is a problem. It may be a tentative compromise, a momentary tactic but not a strategy.

In Nicaragua, about 60 percent of the economy is still controlled by the bourgeoisie. In 1981 65 percent of state credits went to the private sector. This is very important: The bourgeoisie still has considerable means of pressure at its disposal. In order to resist the imperialist offensive it is not possible to seek support from the mixed economy.

The mixed economy is an obstacle to the mobilization of the workers and the farmers. In Cuba at the time of the Bay of Pigs landing, most of the workers and farmers mobilized to defend the new workers' state. Castro called for struggle, underlining for the first time the socialist character of the revolution: "We are going to fight back the invaders under the slogan 'Long life to our socialist revolution'."

It was important. The mobilization would not have been so powerful if capitalism had not been overthrown. To maintain the mixed economy in the long run leads to a limitation of workers' mobilizations. That is what Ben Bella did in Algeria.

Jaime Wheelock said at the end of January 1981 in a speech at the first international conference of solidarity with Nicaragua that "the contradictions inherent to the social classes are less important than our material results in the reconstruction of the foundations of the national economy" for "there is our political capacity, the capacity to regulate what some call the reproduction of capital." He also said that the mixed economy was necessary: "We believe that, far from being a problem for the revolution, it is vital for the revolution" (9).

That conception was wrong. Besides the Sandinistas themselves have begun to back off from it as the opposition of the bourgeoisie became more direct. It is possible to control a capitalist sector to which one makes concessions within the framework of the economy of a workers' state, as the Bolsheviks did during the NEP.

But this is not possible in the framework of a bourgeois state. The events in Nicaragua have borne this out. The private sector has become a prop for the counterrevolution. The private sector will not reinforce the "national unity" in face of imperialism. Rather it helps imperialism's destabilization projects.

In Nicaragua, workers and peasants have kept up their mobilizations against the capitalists. They have not given up the fight for their demands against a bourgeoisie seeking to guarantee its profits via the "mixed economy." There are strikes against the capitalists. In July 1981, one year ago, the government was led to ban the strikes in the public service.

9) *Sandinistas Speak*, Pathfinder Press, New York.

In March 1982, it decreed the state of emergency for 30 days and suspended the right to strike. This did not further the mobilization of the workers. If there is an imperialist intervention it will be the workers and farmers who will rise to defend the revolution, not the bourgeoisie. The workers and farmers must be mobilized. The mixed economy will be an obstacle to this mobilization if it is prolonged. The only possible strategy is to overthrow capitalism; otherwise capitalism will overthrow the revolution.

If we say this it is not for the sake of criticizing the Sandinistas. We are not in their place and we have a lot to learn from their experience. We say this modestly, but we must say it, for the decisive clashes are still to come and we must do all we can to help with the victory of the revolution.

First of all, we must help with our activities in support of the revolution, as the Fourth International has always known how to do. But we must also understand our support from the political point of view. This is not sectarianism.

We can debate with our comrades from Solidarity about the strategical problems of the political revolution in Poland. We can intervene in the movement, defend our ideas there without sectarianism, without any illusion of having ready-made recipes. But we have the duty to criticize the "strategy of self-limitation" for it is dangerous for the revolution. This doesn't make us sectarian. We can and we must do the same vis-a-vis our Sandinista comrades.

That is why we have declared ourselves in favor of a building a section of the Fourth International in Nicaragua. Of course it is not a question of proclaiming a small group. Tactical questions of great importance must be debated, particularly given the weaknesses of the Trotskyist groups in Nicaragua.

But we must intervene in a conscious and organized way in the course of the revolution. We can and we must make our weight felt. The Sandinistas are revolutionaries. Our problem is not to "compete" with them. We want to work with them fraternally.

The Fourth International is still a small and insufficiently rooted organization. It has flaws, but it is the only organization in the world to consistently defend the interests of the world proletariat. It is the only organization which is both on the side of the workers in the imperialist countries, on the side of the workers in Cuba and in Nicaragua, and on the side of the Polish workers.

The Fourth International must seek to intervene in Cuba and Nicaragua. This is the greatest contribution we can make to the struggle of the Cubans and of the Nicaraguans. The main problem they are presented with is the crisis of the leadership of the proletariat. That is what explains the limits of the Cuban revolution and the difficulties of the revolution in Central America. In building the Fourth International we contribute to help these revolutions and help to further their course toward socialism.

Theses on the Workers' and Farmers' Government

by George Breitman, Fourth Internationalist Tendency (USA)

1) The concept of the "workers' and farmers' government" has been used in different ways at various times:

a) Lenin and the Bolsheviks, after October 1917, used it interchangeably with the idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and the "workers' state" when describing the Soviet power in Russia. All three concepts were intended to indicate a clearly pro-socialist government with a decisive proletarian majority. No terminological distinctions were made between the period *before* and *after* definitive measures were taken to nationalize the economy. Other terms were also used, such as "the dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry," and "worker and peasant republic," etc.

b) The Fourth Comintern Congress (in 1922) codified a different use of the "workers' government" idea (later consistently referred to as the "workers' and peasants' government"). This was an extension of the tactic of the united front between the parties of the Comintern and reformist forces in the workers' movement. In this type of workers' and peasants' government reformist forces would predominate, and the Bolshevik forces would be in a minority, if they were participants at all. Although such a government would be incapable of leading the transition to socialist economic forms, it would provide a bridge to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat. The Fourth Congress considered it possible for such a workers' and farmers' government to actually come to power in exceptional circumstances, but the most likely course was still recognized to be the assumption of power by communist forces. Even if this type of petty-bourgeois workers' and farmers' government never actually came into existence, however, the *concept* was considered a useful propaganda tool to reach the broad masses who were still under the sway of reformist leaderships. Used in this way, the slogan itself had a transitional character.

c) In the *Transitional Program* (1938) Trotsky recognized this two-fold character of the workers' and farmers' government idea. He used and explained it both in the sense that he and Lenin had after 1917 in Russia (as a popularization of the dictatorship of the proletariat), and in the sense of the Fourth Comintern Congress (a government dominated by petty-bourgeois parties which would be "merely a short episode on the road to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat"). The possibility of the second type of workers' and farmers' government actually coming to power he described as a "highly improbable variant;" and his main concern was in its use as a transitional slogan.

d) In the 1960s, Joseph Hansen used the concept of the workers' and farmers' government to analyze the development of the world revolution after World War II. He said that in Eastern Europe, China, and Cuba, Stalinist or other radical petty-bourgeois leaderships *had* taken governmental power; and due to specific exceptional circumstances had *also* proven capable of moving forward to the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. This he said was similar to the process conceived of by the Fourth Comintern Congress and by Trotsky in the *Transitional Program*, except that they had excluded the possibility that such governments would prove capable of actually taking this step of nationalizing

the economy. Hansen also introduced a new meaning for the workers' and farmers' government concept — as a scientific descriptive term to indicate the period in a socialist revolution when the governmental and military power of the bourgeoisie has been overthrown, but decisive economic power remains in the hands of the old ruling class. This he distinguished from the "workers' state," which he defined as the period *after* the expropriation of the bourgeoisie.

2) Today we continue to use the idea of the workers' and farmers' government in all three of these ways. To the extent that we foresee an *actual* government in power with this slogan it is a popularization of and a synonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat *in the same sense* that Lenin and the Bolsheviks used it after October 1917 in Russia. When we use this slogan in a transitional way in approaching workers who are not yet fully convinced of a revolutionary program, or when we call on mass reformist workers parties, in a country like France for example, to take power and wield it in the interests of the toilers, we are using a united front-type approach like that of the Fourth Comintern Congress. When we describe the current Nicaraguan or Grenadian regimes as workers' and farmers' governments, we are designating the stage of development of the revolutionary process in those countries. These different uses must be kept distinct and made clear in any discussion of the workers' and farmers' government.

3) A program of economic and social change is an inherent part of any anti-capitalist revolution. But although this program can be clarified, and steps toward its implementation taken through the dual power in the course of the political-military struggle against the old order, the victory of that struggle is a prerequisite for decisive economic and social measures. This is the unique characteristic of the socialist revolution, which means that there will inevitably be a period after the political and military power of the bourgeoisie has been overthrown but before economic power is decisively in the hands of the proletariat.

4) The tasks of the revolutionary government in this period — the period of the workers' and farmers' government — consist of dismantling whatever vestiges of bourgeois state power remain, and replacing them with proletarian forms; organizing the masses to implement workers' control over production; and taking whatever socialist economic measures are necessary to keep the economic power of the bourgeoisie under control — leading to the decisive transfer of that economic power to the proletariat.

5) The time that may elapse between the military-political victory of the working class and its final assumption of economic power has been shown by real life to vary according to the objective reality. But even in the most favorable circumstances it can only be a relatively brief interlude, and can in no case be considered a separate historical "stage." The length of this interlude will depend on many factors, including most importantly the strength of the domestic bourgeoisie and the ability and willingness of external counterrevolutionary forces to intervene. The stronger these dangers, the more quickly will the necessity be posed of the working class appropriating the decisive economic

power or being overthrown.

6) Historical experience has also demonstrated that the period of the revolution which Hansen characterized as the workers' and farmers' government can be filled by either the Bolshevik-type (proletarian) workers' and farmers' government, or by the Fourth Comintern Congress-type (united front, petty-bourgeois). In general, agreeing on a characterization of a particular regime as a workers' and farmers' government in the sense used by Hansen only begins to enlighten us as to its character. There is a qualitative difference between Russia in 1917, on the one hand, and Algeria under Ben Bella, on the other, to pick the most extreme cases. Other specific developments fall on a continuum between these two extremes based on the subjective factor — the degree to which the leadership of the workers' and farmers' government adheres to a revolutionary Marxist, i.e. Bolshevik, program. The fact that workers' and farmers' governments have been led by petty-bourgeois forces in most of the post-World War II social transformations has resulted in major sacrifices and hardships for the masses.

7) In the post-World War II social transformations such as Eastern Europe, China, Cuba, etc. where one or another type of radical petty-bourgeois government came to power, this set the stage for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat by disarming and disenfranchising the old ruling classes. However, the new ruling parties actively disavowed socialist inten-

tions (as they had before coming to power) and in the beginning took measures to consolidate a *strategic* coalition with the bourgeoisie which would be based on long-term guarantees of capitalist property relations. Therefore, we cannot speak of the dictatorship of the proletariat in these cases until a second qualitative turning point in the revolutionary process — the actual decision by these governments to expropriate the bourgeoisie and establish workers' states.

8) However, in the case of the conquest of power by a genuine revolutionary Marxist party (as in Russia in 1917), with a clear path charted toward the creation of a workers' state based on socialized property forms, then the establishment of the workers' and farmers' government in the sense we have been discussing marks the basic qualitative turning point in the transition from a capitalist state to a workers' state (the decisive resolution of the violent conflict between the old and the new). It is at this point that the dictatorship of the proletariat *begins*, although many tasks and battles lie ahead before it is completely consolidated and firmly constructed. The point at which economic power passes decisively into the hands of the proletariat is still an important milestone for the revolution, but even if this is delayed for some time it can only be correctly understood as a continuation, deepening, extension, and decisive consolidation of the original qualitative change which occurred when the proletariat assumed governmental power.

RESOLUTIONS AND REPORTS FROM 1979 WORLD CONGRESS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

1. **The World Political Situation and the
Tasks of the Fourth International**
2. **Report on the World Political Situation
By Ernest Mandel**
3. **World Congress Statement on Iran**
4. **The Turn to Industry and the Tasks of the
Fourth International
By Jack Barnes**
5. **Resolution on Latin America**
6. **Resolution on Women's Liberation**
7. **Resolution on Europe**
8. **Appeal for Solidarity With Nicaragua
By Youth Organizations of the Fourth International**
9. **Building Revolutionary Youth Organizations
By Margaret Jayko**
10. **Revolution on the March —
Theses on the Nicaraguan Revolution**
11. **Counterline Amendments to 'Revolution on the March'**
12. **Statement on Nicaragua**
13. **The Sino-Indochinese Crisis**
14. **New Advances in the Indochinese Revolution
And Imperialism's Response**
15. **Resolution on Indochina**
16. **Socialist Democracy and Dictatorship of the Proletariat**
17. **Socialism and Democracy**

Available in special supplement to *Intercontinental Press*, \$1.00

Resolutions From May, 1981 International Executive Committee Meeting

1. **The World Situation and the Tasks of the
Fourth International** (Sept. 28 and Oct. 5, 1981
Intercontinental Press). \$2.50 for both issues
2. **The Cuban Revolution, the Castroists, and
the Fourth International** (Oct. 19, 1981 *Intercontinental Press*). \$1.25

To order the above write: *Intercontinental Press*
410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014
Enclose check or money order plus \$.50 for shipping costs.